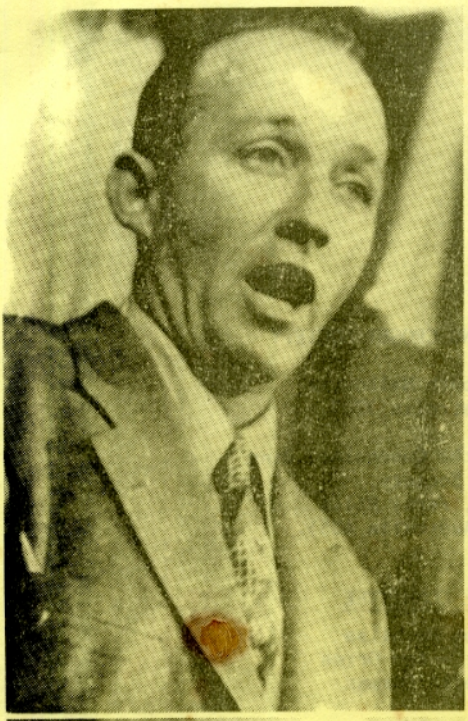

THE CROSBY VOICE ISSUE No 43 FEBRUARY 1988
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THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY

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AN APOLOGY

This issue of the Crosby Voice is very very very late.

It should have only been very late.

Unfortunately, circumstances beyond out control took over in the form of printing problems and there was no way that we could overcome them.

Hopefully, the next edition of the magazine will be out within a reasonable time, closer to its normal May deadline.

Bob Machliss

Hello again,

Well, we've been late with the Crosby Voice before, but never this late. I do apologize, but the reason is simple. Since I went freelance in my work, I have inundated with projects to work on with the result that I'm often at my desk up to twelve hours a day! Good for me, but not so good for things Crosby. As a result, I simply have not had time to work on the magazine until now. To make up for the delay, I have produced the biggest issue ever of The Crosby Voice - 48 pages. And this makes me wonder. How would you feel if we produce a mammoth issue like this three times a year instead of a smaller magazine four times p.a? I would appreciate your thoughts and comments because it would certainly make my life easier.

One point I forgot to mention last issue; because I no longer work for an office, I no longer have access to video dubbing equipment, and therefore, regrettably, I can no longer offer the movie dubbing service to members.

One new piece of equipment that has my way as a self-employed person is a fax machine - that wonderful gadget that permits you to transmit written words and pictures over the telephone lines. If you have access to a fax machine and would like to fax me letters instead of writing them, you are very welcome to do so. The number is (03) 527 7548. This equally applies to members living in other countries as the fax service is international.

By the way, thank you to all members who sent Christmas Cards and greetings. They were much appreciated.

I don't know whether it's possible to summarise the highlights of this huge issue in a one page, but I'll try.

Mark Scrimger sent two interesting items (more actually) which appear in the magazine and they make an interesting contrast. On page 9, you can read a 1942 article from the Saturday Evening Post, a fairly predictable piece on Bing's history by journalist H. Allen Smith. Some years later, Mr Smith produced a book called LIFE IN A PUTTY KNIFE FACTORY and one of the chapters deals with his experiences in putting together the 1942 article. It's fascinating to read what went on behind the scenes. Not what you might expect. You can read the Crosby chapter on page 40.

Other highlights this issue:

Page 9: The annual advertisement from the Crosby Club's and members around the world in VARIETY.

Page 4: News of a terrific re-release from CBS in America.

Page 19: First in a new feature: MEET THE MEMBERS.

Page 26: 2 famous collectors are featured in Vern Taylor's Crosby Profiles.

Page 34: The rarest Crosby commercial release label in the world.

Page 22: Two more albums out in the Chronological Bing Crosby series.

Page 32: A new home for the Bing Crosby Historical Society.

Page 39: Girvan Paterson gets Crosby movies shown on TV.

And that's just a sample.

One item I forgot to include, the winners of the five Tenth Anniversary record sets in the UK. The lucky members were: Max Henson, Bob Schrader, Joe Stevens, John Picone and Ian Walker, all from Melbourne.

And one more highlight: This club is holding an international raffle for two copies of Tim Morgereth's book "BING CROSBY - A DISCOGRAPHY, RADIO PROGRAM LIST AND FILMOGRAPHY". Read how you can win on page 18.

Enough from me. Let's get on with the magazine.

FUTURE FUNCTIONS

FILM EVENING - MONDAY APRIL 11TH

WELCOME STRANGER

PLUS

CHECK AND DOUBLE CHECK

First time up for both these movies which will be screened from video.

We were due to screen CHECK AND DOUBLE DECK at our February meeting, however, a video of REMEMBERING BING arrived and as this was very topical, was screened instead. And highly enjoyable it was, too.

Venue, as usual, is the theatrette of the AMP Building, Cnr William and Bourke Streets in the City.

Starting time is 7.30 sharp.

Members: $4
Pensioners & Students: $2
Non-members: $5

THE DATES FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR

JUNE 27

AUGUST 22

OCTOBER 24

DECEMBER 5

Please enter these dates in your diary now.

THE UNFORGETTABLE BING CROSBY

MAY 3rd, 1903 — OCTOBER 14th, 1977

A 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

WORLDWIDE CROSBYANA SALUTES THE REMARKABLE TALENTS OF A REMARKABLE MAN

CIC VIDEO

MCA RECORDS LONDON

Iain Arnott
Rena Albanesi
L. Austin
George Adey
Robert Berger
Cliff M. Brisbois
Zel Brisbois
Charles D. Baillie
Reg Bristo
Dennis Barker
Mr & Mrs. Arnold Baker
Dave Burrows
Ken Barnes
Arthur Blood
Pierre Bugnot (France)
Ted Berryman
Michael Collins
John Coomes
James Cooper
Charles W. Campbell
Phil Clarke
George Diver
Jack Darnell
Alan Dell BBC Radio 2 London
Lawrence & Cynthia Doyle
Patricia Doyle
Joseph D'Adamio
Virgil E. Edwards
William Emery
George F. Evelsizer
Arne Engel Radio KUBB Mnpls.
Joe Francis
Rich Grudens
Gonzaga University
Peter D. Green
Leslie Gaylor
Harry G. Gledhill
Robert R. Gaunt
Jim Halms
Gwen Harvey
Len Hawkings
Mack Harbin
D.G. Hellier
Eva Hooley
Arthur Holmes
Anthony Hawthornthwaite
Albert Harvey
Lester Hershkowitz
Johnny Jones
William B. James
Eric Jackson
Frans Van Der Kolf (Holland)
John Kane
Alison Kane
Simon Kane
Alice Kane
Susanna Kane
Seamus Kelly
Larry Keiren

The International Crosby Circle
The New Bing Crosby Colour Photoclub
The Bing Crosby Historical Society
The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
The Friends of Bing Crosby
Club Crosby "Bingang."

Robert D. Lundberg
William S. Link
Robert J. Larsson
Edgar Allan Lawson
C.D. Linton
Sylvia Lawrence
John Lawson
Ian B. Lawrence
Roger A. Mesiano
Frank B. McAlister
Daphne B. Moran
Malcolm MacFarlane
Charles Martin
Bert Morton
Dolores Mayo
John Manston
Frank Murphy
John C. Marshall
Peter Moore
Leonard Nuttal
David Newbold
William Orenstein
Glenanwy Owen
Sheldon O'Connell (Canada)
Girvan Patterson (Australia)
Colin Pugh
Alfred Peyton
Nicholas M. Polus
Richard Pearson
Jim Reilly
David J. Swearington
Joseph F. Sieberhaar
Dennis Saville
Trevor Smith
Ernest H. Sutkowski
Cab Smith
Patricia Sullivan
Les Street
Barry Sandercock
Dave Spong
Janet Snow
Francis Smith
J.W. Stonehouse (MBE)
Edward Stirrup
Sinatra Music Society (U.K.)
Kevin J. Sheather
John L. Sarto
Mathew Sprott
Ken Twiss
Frederick A. Tilt
George Ulrich
Eric Vincent
Stan White
Trevor Wagstaff
Gordon Wesley
Bill Wesley
Wig Wiggins
Jack Wittenborn
Sylvia Walsh
Norman Wolfe

The legend continues

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A VERY EXCITING RE-RELEASE FROM CBS IN AMERICA

****

Several years ago, CBS issued three LP's of Bing's early 30's recordings under the title "A CROSBY COLLECTION". The man responsible for this re-issue was an Englishman named Michael Brooks. In recent times, new recording technology such as digital re-mastering has resulted in a greatly improved sound being achievable from vintage record masters. In view of these developments, Michael Brooks has prevailed upon CBS to not only re-master and re-release his three original recordings (with ? extra tracks being added to each) but add a fourth volume to the series. These four LP's (and CD's and cassettes) are due any day now. Whether they'll be issued in Australia remains to be seen but we're keeping our fingers crossed.

Around October last year, Michael Brooks was interviewed on a great nostalgia show called THE BIG BROADCAST in New York. Thanks to member Stan Leland, I have a tape of that show and I thought that you would be interested in hearing what Mr Brooks has to say. Unfortunately, I can't play you some of the tracks from the new releases, but the quality is outstanding, especially when you hear the original LP release and digitally remastered LP release contrasted as they were on the show.

The original interview runs for an hour or so, so I have selected the highlights that will be of interest. I didn't catch the surname of the interviewer, but his first name is Richard.

RICHARD: My guest is Michael Brooks of CBS Records and he's one of the folks producing their Jazz Masterpieces Series. There are currently at least 20 titles in that catalogue including THE 1930'S BIG BANDS, THE QUINTESSENTIAL BILLIE HOLIDAY, and a new issue of Benny Goodman's CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT.

Michael, among your current projects is a digital re-mastering of your three-volume Bing Crosby Collection. Tell us some of the things that are on the set.

MICHAEL: Well there were originally three volumes, fourteen cuts apiece and we're adding two cuts to each volume, plus doing a fourth volume of sixteen cuts and completely re-arranging the sequence so that it's chronological. These will all be issued on CD, LP and cassette and my admirable engineer Frank Abbey is doing a superb job of re-mastering. So even if you have the original issues, and this is not a plug, I think you'll be surprised at the sound quality difference in some of the tracks.

RICHARD: Michael, tell us a little bit about the technical end of the transfer.

MICHAEL: Well, let me tell you about some of the problems we faced on tracks like LAZY DAY and YOUNG AND HEALTHY. Originally, LAZY DAY was a very buried recording. The other cuts made at that session are much brighter and nearer the mike, but for some reason, the whole track is very muffled and there's not much you can do about that. Originally we used a vinyl test pressing that had a very high level of surface noise, so in order to muffle most of the hiss, we muffled the band even more. What you heard first time round was this very muddy, frequently distorted recording. In this case, we got in the original metal part which we found had oxidised, cleaned it with a special solution, copied it and it was much cleaner. Then we could bring the band and the voice more forward and you can also hear the guitar much better.

Now in the case of YOUNG AND HEALTHY, we did have a metal part for it, but it was so badly buckled and bent that it wouldn't track. So we originally took it from a shellac pressing and again, the incidence of surface noise was very high. Since then, Frank invented a huge metal plate which you can put the metal part on

and there are clamps that screw down very tightly over it and that straightens the metal out to a degree that we can track it. There was still a lot of bumping and thumping in the lower end because the stylus was bouncing around but he could cancel the low end bump electronically. So what you hear now is from the original metal, and it is much cleaner.

What you tend to forget is where the metal exists, it is not new metal. Not only is it fifty years old but there has probably been 1500 to 2000 records stamped from that part, so it is worn. But they are the only tools we have and we do what we can with them.

RICHARD: Well fifty years ago they never anticipated that people would be wanting to hear the material again.

MICHAEL: No, they were taken off the press when the record was deleted and stuck in a corner and stored. Today, the condition they come in where they do exist is often very poor. Very often, they don't exist. They were melted down for scrap in World War 2 when more important things were happening.

RICHARD: Are there lost Crosby sessions or is pretty much everything he did accounted for?

MICHAEL: I think that just about everything is accounted for. There is the companion to the Frankie Trambaur MISSISSIPPI MUD, FROM MONDAY ON on Okey which doesn't exist, although there is still a strong rumour that it came out in Australia in mistake for MISSISSIPPI MUD but I've never been able to pin that down.

And there is an early Brunswick, now owned by Decca, called HOW THE TIME CAN FLY which was never released and I don't think that anyone has ever found a test pressing of that. But I think that almost everything else, even though the parts don't exist anymore, is owned by somebody somewhere in a test pressing form.

RICHARD: I mentioned earlier that in the case of HOME ON THE RANGE, Bing was at or near the height of his pipes. Now there are some Crosby collectors who feel that Bing was just never the same after he made the switch from Brunswick to Decca in 1934. Now you took that a step further in your notes. You felt that Bing never sounded as good as he did in Los Angeles in the middle of June, 1933.

MICHAEL: Yes that's right. I certainly agree with the theory that when he went to Decca he lost something. But listening to even the slightly later Brunswick/ Columbias, anything after June '33, there is an edge missing. That L.A. session, HOME ON THE RANGE, THE LAST ROUNDUP, some of the things from GOING HOLLYWOOD like AFTER SUNDOWN show him at the peak of his voice.

RICHARD: Is there a period of Bing that you just don't care for? Does he reach a point where you'd rather listen to Johnny Ray!

MICHAEL: No, never that drastic! I really don't like any of the Deccas after 1938. I think that they become so formularized. I don't think that there is any heart there. There was no guts. And I think a lot of that was to do with Jack Kapp. Kapp was a very hard-headed businessman. He founded the label at 35 cents and he just churned out records. He threw it up against the wall and hoped that something would stick. And when you consider the enormous amount of records that Bing made for Decca, the number of good songs was not that great. You look at, say, some of the great Broadway shows of that period. He didn't do many show songs; he didn't do many movie songs apart from his own movies; he didn't do that many standards. There's an awful lot of second, third and fifth rate songs he did which sold because of the name on the label.

RICHARD: When I think of the non-movie tunes, it's rare when you have one that really sticks out in your head. The one I think of is THE FOLKS WHO LIVE ON THE HILL.

MICHAEL: Well that's one of the very few Jerome Kern songs that he recorded and Kern was writing superb songs, but there isn't that much on record. The same with Gershwin, the same with Rogers and Hart - apart from the movie that they wrote the songs for - MISSISSIPPI.. There's not that much of Cole Porter either. And even the second echelon of composers like Dubin and Warren and Gordon and Revel. There were Robin and Rainger but they were Paramount house composers.

RICHARD: I wanted to ask you, and I know from reading your notes that this wasn't the happiest moment in your life, but tell us about your meeting with Bing.

MICHAEL: Well, he was performing in New York at the time when I first put these records together, and I had got hold of his press agent who arranged a meeting. On the day I went along with cassettes and all sorts of questions, thrilled like a little kid, and I turned up at the apartment building and his wife came down. She was very gracious and said "Oh yes, he knows all about the meeting. He's got a bad tooth, he's had to go out to the dentist. Would you like to wait?" So I waited about an hour and then Bing came strolling in with some dry cleaning over his arm, and I said "Mr Crosby" and I got this glare from these cold ice blue grey eyes, and I said "I'm Michael Brooks and I have an appointment with you...". "I don't know who you are and I know nothing about this." So I stammered and said "Well it was all arranged through your press agent..." "I know nothing about it and I don't have time." So I retreated with my tail between my legs, and I said "Look I have some cassettes here of the material. Would you be gracious enough to listen to them and give me your comments?" "Yeah, give them to me." And that was the last I heard from Bing. It's silly, because he probably wasn't feeling very well; he maybe had other things to do. I felt like a little kid who's asked a baseball player for his autograph and was told to get lost! And it had quite a traumatic effect.

RICHARD: I wanted to ask you Michael, are there certain artists that you think people would like if they were only given half a chance?

MICHAEL: Yes, Cliff Edwards for one. Edwards is always considered a comedy singer but he's more than that. He was a Broadway star, a star of movies, he was a good actor and I would think, the first scat singer, even before Louis Armstrong, whom I revere. Cliff was doing scat singing in 1924 and he was a good jazz singer too. His sense of timing and phrasing are sbsolutely impeccable.

Of course, there are the Boswell Sisters. The Andrews Sisters always get credit for being the premiere girl group but they admit themselves that they learned everything from the Boswells.

Annette Hanshaw who I think was the best girl singer of the late 20's and early 30's. Chick Bullock I have a great weakness for... Not a great singer but a man who was an absolute pro and always did a good job. There are a lot of Jazz bands too - Don Redman, Fletcher Henderson. I could go on and on.

RICHARD: I've got a list of names here. Could you give me a line or two on each of them. Frank Sinatra.

MICHAEL: In his Columbia days, technically, the finaest vocalist around. I just hate the material he did. I think that he had very bad A & R men and very bad arrangers. I think he's wonderful in his Capitol days where the voice had deteriorated but he compensated for this be becoming a far better singer.

(Elvis Presley?) Elvis picked up everything from people like Arthur Crudup and the black rhythm and blues singers. I don't think he gave very much to music. He was a copyist. He bowdlerized everything. He 'white-breaded' it. There's a lot worse than Presley, but I think the adoration he gets is overrated.

(Bessie Smith?) The finest woman country blues singer around. The bedrock that everone else is based on.

(Henry Red Allen Jr?) Wonderful. Allen is probably my favourite trumpet player, even though Louis was the greatest. He was doing things in the 1930's that other people weren't doing until ten years later. And I love his singing too.

(Django Reinhart?) No, I don't like Django. I find the Quintet of the Hot Jazz Club of France very boring. That awful 'chonky chonky' rhythm that just goes on and on. He was a great soloist, but to me doesn't match somebody like Eddie Lang.

RICHARD: Getting back to Bing again, it really struck me when I saw KING OF JAZZ which was released in 1930 when Bing was still part of the Rhythm Boys, how Bing, more than Barris or Rinker drew my attention immediately. He just seemed to be a natural. How much of Bing do you think was 'Bing'? Was he wised-up early in the game as to how you behave? How do you explain why Bing came off so well so early?

MICHAEL: I don't know. The more I hear about Bing from people who knew him back in the 20's and 30's, he is like an absolutely schizophrenic character. He was very withdrawn, very cold, very anti-social in private life, and yet, in public, on radio and in film, he projected this incredibly warm, open, loving personality, in very casual, very laid back, very hip terms.

He was someone who really knew his way around and could handle himself in any situation with the maximum good humour and the least offence. But the private Crosby doesn't seem to have been like that. Now how much of it was real, I don't know. Certainly, his public personna made him one of the best-loved characters in twentieth century entertainment.

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VARIETY

RADIO-TELEVISION

REMEMBERING BING

With Dorothy Lamour (host), Bob Hope, Patti Andrews, Bob Crosby, Kitty Carlisle Hart, Mary Martin, Donald O'Connor, Jane Wyman, Victor Borge, Rhonda Fleming, Phil Harris, Norman Panama, Anthony Quinn, Gary Giddins, Mel Torme, Ken Barnes, others

Supplier: WTTW Chicago
Exec Producer: Glenn DuBose
Producer-Writers: James Arntz, Katherine MacMillin
Director: Dick Carter
90 Mins., Sat. (Nov. 28), 9 p.m.
PBS

An appreciation of the professional Bing Crosby leaves out the personal side after Crosby leaves Gonzaga U., but it covers lots of ground in the man's public life. Film clips, few — surprisingly few — disk references, and two kinescopes that are gems are interlaced with tributes from those associated with the late crooner. Unfortunately, there's not enough substance — and not enough full-length tunes.

Don DeMartini's snazzy editing job works to create those images discussed by celebs such as Patti Andrews, Bob Crosby, Kitty Carlisle Hart (costar in the 1934 "Here Is My Heart"), Mary Martin, Donald O'Connor, Jane Wyman and, naturally, Bob Hope.

They reminisce generously about the singer, with Victor Borge, Rhonda Fleming, Phil Harris, Norman Panama, Anthony Quinn, Gary Giddins, Mel Torme and record producer Ken Barnes adding touching observations.

Going back to 1929, spec covers his films, USO tours (with Hope), a couple of tv programs (his stints with Perry Como and Sinatra are the program's standouts), and even unspools a color short subject of Crosby with Al Rinker and Harry Barris as the Rhythm Boys.

Program never steps behind the cameras to show recording sessions, and Crosby gets to complete few tunes — "Once In A While," recorded three days before his death, and including verse as well as chorus, sounds rich and springlike over the final crawl.

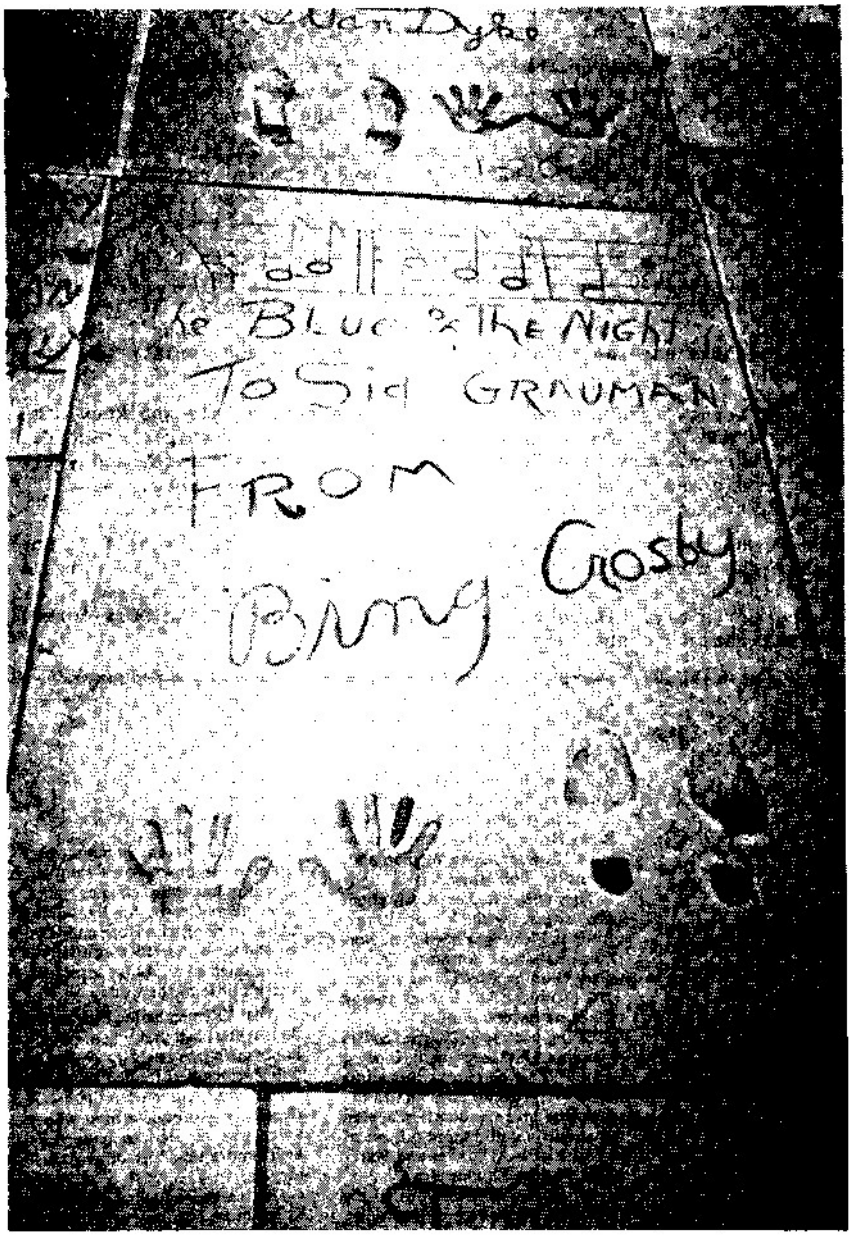
Obviously, producer-writer James Arntz and Katherine MacMillin needed more time or clearances to give a fuller professional picture.

Which is what the 90-minute program boils down to: a sampler. Dorothy Lamour, acting as emcee, remembers Crosby fondly, talking about working with Hope and Crosby and the wonderful confusion she was subjected to. As for substance, there's little to chew on.

What "Remembering Bing" does do is reestablish the style of paying honors to a late celebrity whom the public remembers fondly. Much has been left out, but much is there — if fleetingly — about a man whose voice was reputed to have been heard more than any other in history.

I.D.'s are missing in the scramble to get more clips on, and musical direction credits are missing, and the private Bing Crosby is never explored, only acclaimed.

Spec is easy watching and listening, and for those who do remember the incomparable Bing Crosby, the tribute produced by WTTW Chicago, will appeal. Dick Carter directed, and exec producer was Glenn DuBose. —*Tone.*



SECOND TIME LUCKY

As you would be aware, the reproduction of some of the photographs in the last issue of the Crosby Voice was, well, murky, to say the least. In some of them you could at least recognize human shapes, but this shot was totally unintelligible! So here it is again, Bing's handprints and signature in cement outside the Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. Second time lucky, I hope.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
FOUNDED BY

BING—
KING OF THE GROANERS

By H. ALLEN SMITH

Nobody really knows Crosby—the man who once made a wild-oats patch of the United States and now makes a million dollars a year.

BACK in that remote summer of 1939 when the New York World's Fair was pointing a stucco thumb toward the sweet-swimming World of Tomorrow, Bing Crosby was vacationing in the East, and one evening, in company with a friend named Harvey Schaefer, the Hollywood singer turned up at the Flushing exposition.

The two men got into the Aquacade without Bing's being recognized and took seats down front. Bing watched the show in silence, but Harvey Schaefer let himself go in a running commentary on diving and swimming. He professed himself to be an authority on the technical aspects of diving, and Bing listened to his disquisition without comment. At last the performers began their plunges from the fifty-foot board and Harvey Schaefer spoke learnedly of the special skill and co-ordination required for this form of aquatic sport.

Bing interrupted him. "I could do it," he said.

Schaefer snorted. "You could do it!" he repeated. "Why, you wouldn't dare go off that fifty-foot board. I'd bet you a hundred you wouldn't."

"Sit right where you are," said Bing, and away he went. Ten minutes later the announcer's voice came through the amplifiers:

"Ladies and gentlemen, the next dive from the fifty-foot board will be by the noted Hollywood singer, Bing Crosby."

A spotlight fell on the high board and out stepped Bing in a light-blue swimming suit. He didn't hesitate, but stepped forward and came through the air with fully as much grace as any of the professionals. In another twenty minutes he was back to collect his hundred.

Schaefer was an old friend and he could understand Bing's eager acceptance of a challenge. The thing that startled him was the ease and perfection of the Crosby performance. It happens Bing, in his younger days, was an expert swimmer and diver, and Harvey Schaefer didn't know that. Nobody knows Bing Crosby like a book, for he is a man of confusing contradictions and his personality is split like the flared end of a bamboo rake.

To millions who know him only through the radio, the movies and phonograph records, Bing is the friendliest guy in the United States, an amiable, breezy and prankish boy who never grew up and never will. He has often been called the laziest man in Hollywood and his immense public seems to regard him as a lackadaisical fellow who lies all day in the shade of a tree with a straw in his teeth, rousing himself only when somebody nudges him and tells him to sing another song.

That's a deceptive picture. He confesses his laziness and says he hates work, yet he labors longer and more steadily than nine-tenths of the dynamic drones who surround him. He just looks lazy.

His versatility often startles even those people who are closest to him. He has what Hollywood calls "a terrific head." Few people know, for example, that he is a better writer than many of the gentlemen who inhabit the Hollywood script sheds. He is filled with an easy rhythm, which is reflected in everything he does, physical and mental.

His chief income is from movies, yet he is not an actor, for he is incapable of any characterization that is alien to his own personality. From the beginning in pictures he has played but one successful role - Bing Crosby. Certain directors have tried to drill him into roles that contained little or nothing of the Crosby attitude. Their projects have been failures. Crosby pictures that have met with public favor have been those in which Bing was playing Bing.

A Crooner With Hair on His Chest

HE IS loose in the joints and, under almost all circumstances, as relaxed as a wet bath towel. He never appears to be exerting or extending himself. He sings so effortlessly that he gives listeners a vague feeling that they, too, could do that sort of thing.

He came to fame under the odious denomination of crooner and as such might have expected no more than contempt from the American mule; yet his audience is not preponderantly female. During the bitter days of the Bataan peninsula General MacArthur radioed the White House that his warriors wanted to hear Crosby; at the same time soldiers in camp throughout the nation flooded the Hit Parade broadcast with such a demand for Crosby that his own radio sponsors, Kraft-Phenix Cheese Corporation, had to relax their exclusive hold on his services and permit his appearance on the cigarette show.

He has, nonetheless, known something of the opprobrium that his fellow man is inclined to visit upon crooners. The first time he ever sang in public was at a school dance back in Spokane. He was the drummer in a noisy school-kids' orchestra called The Musicsladers and one night he left his traps, stepped forward and started singing a chorus of For Me and My Gal. His voice quavered and his kneecaps were jumping, but he kept going. When Bing was halfway through the song a young man danced close to the platform and called him a varicolored flower. Bing finished his first public solo, stepped to the floor, dragged the offender into the yard and knocked him flat.

Years later he and his racing partner, Lin Howard, stopped in a San Diego saloon and Bing was recognized at the bar. Half a dozen fatheads began badgering him, passing remarks reflecting on his masculinity. He grinned it off for a while, but when the ragging got nasty he announced that he would take on the entire company one at a time. He had finished off his first opponent and was chopping the second one down when the battle was broken up. He has always been a hard man in a fight.

There was a time when he could be angry in the grand manner. In his early Hollywood days he was known as the most terrible tempered golfer ever seen on the Lakeside course. It was his custom after dubbing a shot to shatter his clubs one by one, stamp his bag to shreds and then, in slow rage, to rip his own clothing off his back. Today he rarely even argues with people. Let a quarrelsome situation arise and Bing simply shuts his mouth and walks away from it.

There is no questioning his supremacy among singers. It is unlikely that a single minute passes, day or night, when his voice is not being heard somewhere in the world -by way of home phonograph, juke box, movie sound track or radio. His node-studded larynx has brought him plenty of the stuff he calls "scratch."

Until war threw the national economy out of kilter, Bing's gross take each year could be reckoned at pretty close to a million. His working schedule called for three movies a year, his salary running from $150,000 to $200,000 per picture, depending on the number of weeks occupied in shooting. His pay check from radio comes to $7500 per broadcast thirty-nine weeks out of the year. And his royalties from records ran above $100,000 in 1941. What happens from now on, of course, is anybody's guess.

Bing has been in show business for eighteen years. He has never had much faith in himself, in his future, save perhaps at the very beginning of his career, when he felt that he might, with help from on high, become a middling vaudeville performer. He has always attributed his success to the workings of Providence. During the dizziness that came with his first blossoming as a radio star, someone asked him if luck had anything to do with his career. He shook his head and replied that 85 per cent of his success was due to his mother's prayers. He meant it.

He has been wheedled and bluffed and tricked into doing the things that in the end brought a golden torrent pouring into his lap. It has been said, in truth, that his career makes a bum out of Horatio Alger, Jr. In his day he violated all the rules over and over again and he continues to violate them. He believes in Heaven, Home and Mother, but beyond that he thumbs his nose at convention. A stuffed shirt is deep in enemy territory when it comes within a furlong of Crosby.

A Hollywood Contradiction

HOLLYWOOD says that it is unfashionable to attack Hollywood, yet the community mural contains large splotches and daubs. Bing Crosby lives in Hollywood, but none of the town's evils seems to have touched him. It cannot even be said that he is avaricious. Within the last year he shocked his associates by announcing his determination to quit work. "I don't want to make any more money," he said. "I've got everything I want." He seems to be a biological sport in the Hollywood zoo. He is actually color-blind, but that condition is not responsible for the fantastic clothes he wears. His wild and noisy apparel is a satirical commentary on Hollywood's habits of dress. His clothes are laughing.

He is the despair of publicity men in a community where world-famous men and women have been known to make themselves ridiculous to get into print. He has a genuine aversion for the hammy attitude, a fear of being considered a show-off, so he fights off interviewers and sometimes makes Donald Duck noises at the sight of a press camera.

His attitude toward the press is again paradoxical, for his personality contains most of the elements of the semimythical newspaperman to whom nothing is sacred. With or without his raffish hat he'd fit neatly into the cast of The Front Page.

He doesn't like to offend people or see them get in trouble, wherefore he's sometimes a sucker for the old dodge: "My boss said I had to get the interview or lose my job." That'll fetch out the sportsman in him and he'll sit down and perhaps talk for a time about his horses or his golf. But let the interview veer around toward his private life and he'll do a fast fade-out.

He contends that he needs publicity—the kind of publicity that comes of being interviewed—about as much as he needs a hole in his head. He has three tremendous publicity outlets at his command: his weekly radio program, three motion pictures a year, and records. These instruments spread the Crosby voice and the Crosby personality over the globe. He cannot prevent a newspaper or magazine writer from twisting his talk and making him look foolish or hammy, but in the production of his movies, of his broadcasts and of his recordings, he is the boss. If Crosby wants a certain thing done, it is done; and if Crosby objects to something else, out it goes. He feels that his job is to entertain and amuse the customers, but not on street corners or in his bedroom. The customers go into a theater and, if they like his performance, then he has done his job. It is not required of him that he be waiting outside to sing another song for them, do a little jig, sign their autograph books and introduce them to his wife and kids. The entire but-you-owe-it-to-your-public theory strikes Bing as being illogical and dopey.

The man doesn't exist who could live in Hollywood without making enemies, and Bing has accumulated a few, principally among certain members of the press who demand utter subservience from the stars and, failing to get it, smell up the universe with their poisonous works. These journalistic germs can't attack Crosby on any of the customary counts: dishonesty, conceit, ingratitude, parsimony, and so forth. So they turn back to the days when Bing was an irresponsible playboy, as wild as a brush-tailed wallaby.

During the half dozen years preceding his marriage, Bing made a wildcat patch out of the United States. He sowed 'em from coast to coast and back again. His early associations were chiefly with jazz musicians who enjoyed hurling it down the hatch. There were times when Bing couldn't maintain the pace, when he took on more than he could tote, and there were times when he looked at the world through iron bars. He took his fun where he found it and when the day came for him to settle down—the day of his marriage to Dixie Lee in 1930—his career as playboy was over. He still drinks, but, in his own phrase, "never in self-defense."

He is today one of the most respectable family men in Hollywood. He has assembled members of the Crosby clan about him and they help run his affairs, sometimes quarreling among themselves, but always standing united against threats from without. On Sundays, disguised in a business suit, he escorts his vigorous sons to Mass. He stands five feet nine and weighs 165 and is in superb health. From childhood up to his early thirties he was always on the chubby side, but today he is lean and as tough as whitleather; his spare hours are spent at golf, tennis, swimming, handball, hunting, fishing. Though one of his major interests is horse racing, he wagers less than many a Hollywood extra, even on his own horses.

By all the evidence, his audience increases year after year, and for a singer who refers deprecatingly to himself as The Groaner, he has a universal appeal that is surprising.

Long-hair artists speak of Crosby as a musical freak and make admiring mention of his fine phrasing. His rank-and-file following is content to say that his singing improves with every year.

His technique has changed with the years. Compared with the Crosby of 1942, the Crosby of 1932 sounded almost shrill.

For himself he still has a feeling that he's defrauding the public. "They're gettin' wise to me," is one of his frequent remarks. When the script for his broadcast is delivered to him and he finds himself scheduled for more than five songs, he sometimes pencils a note in the margin: "You got me singing my damn head off. They'll come and git me."

There is one brief period in his working program when he shows distinct signs of uneasiness and discomfort. That is when he approaches a love scene on a Paramount sound stage. Crosby love scenes are usually short and snappy and seldom very effective, for the simple reason that he goes into them with the back of his neck afire. His technique is by no means improved through the knowledge that he'll catch the very devil from his eldest son, Gary.

His eminently successful films with Bob Hope—Road to Singapore, Road to Zanzibar and Road to Morocco—have been, in a way, a movie set continuation of Crosby-Hope antics outside the range of the camera. A story pattern is followed, to be sure, and the boys are supposed to adhere to the written lines, but they seldom do. They'll cast aside their scripts and go into a whispered routine in which perhaps Hope will say: "Now, you say this and I'll say this and then you say this and then you hit him twice and then I'll say this and you say this." They work out these little routines and when the cameras start turning nobody, not even the director, knows what's coming. Once the author of a Crosby-Hope script came onto the set to be greeted with: "Hey, pal, if you hear one of your own lines, holler 'Screens!'"

Twelve years ago, when he was virtually unknown, Bing went looking for a job in pictures. He appeared before a certain producer and sang, read some dialogue and hoofed a bit. The producer said he might do, except for his ears, which spring impertinently away from his head like the handles of a soup tureen. The producer suggested that Bing submit to an operation that would fetch the ears back into more esthetic angle. Bing used swear words and walked out on the man.

Later on, in his early movies, he permitted the make-up men to glue his ears back and otherwise glamorize his appearance. He performed in some pictures walking on shoes built high off the floor so he would appear taller than his leading lady. Nowadays the make-up man sees him but briefly—just long enough to gum on his toupee.

In recent years the Crosby hair has been going away at an alarming rate. His brothers blame it on Bing's habit of wearing a hat or cap everywhere but in church. There was a

"Pretty tough to get hunting equipment these days, isn't it?"

time when he was self-conscious about his departing hair. Today he says that he's not, though he never permits himself to be photographed top-naked. Pictures of Crosby wearing neither hat nor toupee are rare.

His Paramount contract gives him the right to approve story, director, songs and leading lady, but studio executives say he has never taken undue advantage of his prerogatives. As he controls the production of his movies, so does he have the final say on his Kraft Music Hall broadcasts.

For a long time it was the custom to have an artist from the opera or concert stage appear each week on the radio show. Rose Bampton has been with Bing on the broadcast no less than nine times, and Bing salutes her with: "Hiya, Bamp!" He has sung duets with Bamp, Lotte Lehmann, Greta Stueckgold and other ladies with symphonic personalities. He has exchanged light banter with many of the leading long-hair artistes of the day, interpreting their performances in jive talk and giving them an all-around good time during their visit.

He is not, however, responsible for the cultural side of his radio show. The advertising agency books in such guests and Bing never objects to them. For himself he chooses sports personalities, or virtuosos from that other world in which his enthusiasm lies—hot jazz. He is famous for the crushes he gets on certain musical personalities—the Merry Macs, Jimmy Dorsey, the Andrews Sisters, Dinah Shore, and Claude Thornhill, among others.

When Bing first started on his present radio program back in 1936 he was a disappointment as a master of ceremonies, reading lines with the stiffness of a twelve-toed guest on We the People. The show producers worried along with him and then undertook an experiment.

Infiltration Tactics

Edward G. Robinson appeared on the program and a special script was prepared. Robinson was given four or five lines which did not appear in Bing's script. They were plodding along with Bing performing in his usual stodgy manner when Robinson suddenly said:

"Say, by the way, Bing, how's your golf score these days?"

Bing gave him a frightened double-take, then replied in his most casual manner: "Oh, I'm gettin' down into the lower eighties." They went ahead with the script and after a while Robinson hit him with another surprise question. Again Bing responded as though he were talking to a friend in a horse barn.

After that broadcast Bing raised a rumpus over the trickery, but the following week his guest stars began popping unscheduled questions at him, and before long he was performing as the producers wanted him to perform.

From the beginning there had been an agreement that Bing would never have to appear in front of a studio audience. The producers begged him to reverse his stand, but he was obstinate; studio audiences were anathema to him. Again they resorted to trickery.

The broadcast originated in a large studio with an empty auditorium. One evening all the executives of the advertising agency were sitting in the first two rows of the auditorium. Nothing wrong with that. The following week these same people were in their places and another row or two had been filled with NBC people. Week by week more rows of seats were occupied until at last the house was filled. The thing was done so gradually that Bing didn't seem to notice it, and before he was aware of it, he had become accustomed to the audience.

How a Program is Built

The Crosby program is unique in more respects than one. It is never given a "dress" rehearsal—that is, a full rehearsal from beginning to end just as it will go on the air. Bing and John Scott Trotter, the orchestra leader, rehearse the show, spot by spot, and not necessarily in the proper sequence. Radio people from New York, accustomed to order and split-second precision, sometimes drop in at the Hollywood studio for a Crosby rehearsal. They sit through the haphazard proceedings, noting that everything appears to be in a state of chaos, and they conclude that the show will never hit the air without half a dozen embarrassing breakdowns. Then they sit through the actual broadcast and marvel at the manner in which the parts are fitted together to make a smooth-running whole.

Bing's deportment throughout rehearsal and broadcast is that of a school-kid attending a weenie roast. An economist from Mars would never figure him to be earning $7500 for that gay stint. He cuts capers with the other performers, ribs the technicians, and bandies quips with the musicians. He shows up in his famous "outboard" shirts which look like Dali-designed pajama tops, and he is never without his pipe. Handling the script, a sheaf of song arrangements, a pencil and the pipe would seem enough for one two-handed man, yet Bing also manages to manipulate a racing sheet along with the rest.

Responsibility for the easy informality of the broadcast doesn't rest entirely with Bing. Carroll Carroll, the script writer who sits placidly in the control room throughout the day's daffy proceedings, gets a large measure of credit for it. He has been writing the program from the beginning and much of the good-natured banter comes from his typewriter. Bing gets the script two days ahead of time and alters it to suit his personal whims, contributing the breezy slang that characterizes his ordinary conversation.

Censorship has never troubled him as it has virtually every other radio performer in his category.

Says Carroll Carroll: "Bing has a natural instinct for avoiding anything unwholesome. His taste as to what should be and should not be said on the air is unerring."

His listening public is aware of the consistent rectitude of his broadcasts. Once while interviewing a sports personality on the program, Bing ad-libbed: "Personally, I play one hell of a game of pool." Coming from any other performer that remark would have tied up the station's switchboards and then fetched in a trainload of indignant mail. Bing's listeners let it slide; only two protests came in.

He outdistances any other performer or performing group in volume of record sales. In 1941 more than 5,000,000 Crosby platters were sold in the United States alone. Records have carried his singing to the far crannies of the earth.

Cutting a record is often a more tedious job than the filming of an intricate motion-picture sequence, but not for Bing. He is known in the business as a "quick study." He gets a thing in his head and keeps it there. It took Paul Robeson three and a half days to record Ballad for Americans; Bing did it in four hours. Many times he has finished off the recording of a single song, rehearsal included, in less than thirty minutes. And people who insist that he can't read music are in error. Music is his business. To say he cannot read notes is as ridiculous as if would be to say that Johnny Weissmuller can't put his head under water without holding his nose.

Bing will not make a record unless Jack Kapp, president of Decca Records, is in the studio, because Kapp is the only recording official who can argue with him and get away with it. Bing and his brothers say that Kapp believed in him when nobody else did, and they have been loyal to Decca, spurning any number of offers from Kapp's competitors. Kapp's home and headquarters are in New York and he goes to Hollywood four or five times a year for recording dates with Bing. In the interim they keep up a steady correspondence in which they discuss the schedule for the next date.

Kapp is always on the prowl for Crosby songs, new and old. He has had more influence on the Crosby singing style than any other man. He steered Bing away from the singing eccentricities he acquired in his early days—the hot-lick stuff, the lo-do-do-di-lo-do and buh-buh-boo-buh-boo effects. What Kapp wanted and got from Bing was chiefly romantic ballads and, after that, the gradual emergence of Crosby as a remarkably versatile vocalist.

A long-range program aimed at demonstrating Bing's versatility was plotted by Kapp, who had the conviction that, if Crosby always sang the same type of song in the same fashion, his popularity would soon wear out. He wanted to build Bing in such a manner the customers would one day say: "Good Lord! Isn't there anything that guy can't sing?"

That's precisely what a lot of people say now when they hear new Crosby recordings. The list of his records – something over 300 songs – testifies to the success of the Kapp plan. The list includes Hawaiian songs, cowboy ballads, Stephen Foster, religious songs, Victor Herbert, Gershwin, Ballad for Americans, Brahms' Lullaby, hot-rhythm ditties, torch songs, The Star-Spangled Banner, barbershop ballads, and songs with origins in a dozen foreign lands. There are duets with sweet singers and hot singers and people who can't sing at all, and there's even one record in which Bing and Dixie Lee join voices. He has made records with the Andrews Sisters, the Merry Macs, the Music Maids, and with every kind of musical accompaniment conceivable—from a sweet-potato-quartet to Bob Crosby's hot-jazz ensemble.

Kapp has marathon arguments with Bing over the songs to be recorded. Once he sets his mind on a number which he feels Bing should make, he never stops suggesting it. He decided that Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life would be a natural for Bing, but Bing said no. Each time they got together after that Kapp would bring it up again. He stayed with it for three years before Bing finally agreed to record the Victor Herbert song. It was a best seller, here and in England, for two years.

Bing's royalties from records ran above $100,000 in 1941, but this figure doesn't include income from his religious songs, notably the disk containing Silent Night and Adeste Fideles. This record is Bing's top seller. When he was asked to make it, back in 1935, he balked. "That's not for me," he argued. "Maybe for Lily the Pons, but not for me. I'd be laughed out of the country."

By suggesting that royalties from it go to charity, they got him to make it. That first year, 1935, the sale was sluggish. Bing got a bad press when the record was released. As he had anticipated, some people seemed to regard the mere fact of his making the record as bordering on the sacrilegious.

Even at that, 15,000 of the Silent Night records were sold during the first Christmas season. The next year the sale was 25,000 and the year after that it jumped to 75,000. By Christmas of 1941 the annual sale, accumulating almost altogether during the holidays, had reached 350,000.

Decca keeps a separate account for the Crosby religious records and pays off on them by special check. The money is passed along to charity by Bing. The last check, something over $8000, was used by Larry Crosby, Bing's brother, to finance a series of entertainments in California Army camps, with Bing appearing personally whenever his working schedule permitted.

BING CROSBY was twenty years old before he ever had a suspicion that he might someday sing for money. A rough-and-tumble boyhood was behind him and he was in the homestretch at Gonzaga University's law school when the rhythm itch took complete possession of him.

Bing's parents, Harry Lowe Crosby and Kate Harrigan, founded their family in Tacoma and moved inland to Spokane in 1906, when Bing was five. Harry Crosby worked in the office of a Spokane brewery which, when prohibition came, was converted into a pickle factory. When Bing speaks of "goin' back to the pickle works," he has reference to his vacation-time labors among the gherkins.

The Crosby children, in the order of their appearance, were: Larry, Everett, Ted, Harry Lillis, Catherine, Mary Rose and Bob. There is an accumulation of legend surrounding the circumstances under which pudgy Harry Lillis acquired the nickname of Bing. Some say it came from his preoccupation with a newspaper feature called The Bingville Bugle; others ascribe it to childhood cowboy games in which he cried "Bing! Bing! Bing!" at imaginary Indians. His mother has never accepted the nickname and always calls him Harry.

The Crosby boys knew almost every kind of odd job and they had to contribute their share of work at home making beds, washing dishes, chopping wood, mowing the lawn. As in most such homes the kids quarreled and fought among themselves. Few days passed but that one or another was taken to the basement and given a larruping. Pop Crosby was not a razor-strap man. If one of his children got out of hand it was not uncommon for him to snatch up a stick of kindling wood and whack the offender alongside the head.

As a boy, Bing worked at various jobs. He had a newspaper route, worked as janitor in a dirty loggers' club, drove a grocery truck, served as usher at boxing matches, sorted mail at the post office, perspired through several weeks as a farm hand one summer and, because he was ornery, was put to work as a lumberjack on the Olympic peninsula. In this last job he managed, within a few weeks, to cut a gash in his leg with his own ax and got himself withdrawn from commercial forestry.

His strong point in school was elocution, and he decided at an early age to become a lawyer, daydreaming of the time when he would dazzle a jury with oratorical brilliance. He was studying law at Gonzaga and spending his afternoons as a clerk in a Spokane law office when he met Al Rinker. Rinker was pianist and leader of the Musicaladers—a dance band made up of high-school boys and sorely in need of a good drummer. Bing took the job after purchasing, on the installment plan, a boy's-size set of traps.

The Musicaladers had no use for sheet music because they couldn't read it. They simply copied arrangements from recordings of popular jazz bands. Their playing was 80 per cent noise, 15 per cent rhythm and 5 per cent music, and their original repertoire consisted of four numbers—Jimtown Blues, Prince of Wails, Whispering and Beale Street Blues. They got through their first dance engagement by playing each number first as a foxtrot, then as a waltz and lastly as a one-step.

In time the Musicaladers broke up, but Bing and Al Rinker stuck together as a singing team, specializing in hot rhythms. All their friends told them they were good enough to go on the stage, so they went on the stage. They left Spokane in 1925, driving a broken-down car called Hope Divine, and after a series of minor adventures,

reached Los Angeles, where Bing's brother, Everett, was a truck salesman and Al's sister, calling herself Mildred Bailey, had already begun a career as a singer. In no time at all a new vaudeville team was born: Crosby & Rinker Two Boys and a Piano Singing Songs in Their Own Way. Al played the piano and Bing stood near by holding a cymbal and drumstick, chopping out the fast rhythms as they sang. They featured the popular numbers of the day, tricking up the lyrics with the sort of gibberish that later was called scat-singing, and they finished off this musical madness by yowling their boodle-dee-boos and yodle-dee-yos into gallon-size tin cans.

They made a couple of vaudeville tours through California and then Paul Whiteman caught their act and hired them at $300 a week. They played their first date with Whiteman at the Tivoli, in Chicago, sitting with the other members of the band, Al holding a prop guitar and Bing pretending to play a French horn. When the time came for their songs, Whiteman introduced them as "a couple of lads I picked up in a Walla Walla ice-cream parlor."

The band was eventually booked into the new Paramount Theater in New York, where Crosby & Rinker, who had been show-stoppers in the Middle West, appeared to mystify and bewilder Manhattan audiences. After two performances the boys were yanked from the show and put to work in the lobby entertaining the overflow crowds. That might have been the end of them, but along came a peppery little guy named Harry Barris, and a singing trio was formed—the Paul Whiteman Rhythm Boys. This combination clicked.

Whiteman took his band to England, but left the Rhythm Boys behind, arranging an extensive vaudeville tour to keep them occupied. It was a remarkable safari, filled with confusions, and it ended in Jersey City, where the boys played two miserable shows without costumes or scenery, because of Bing's misfortunes in a crap game.

They dragged themselves back to rejoin Whiteman in New York, expecting to be cashiered from show business. Instead, they found their boss in a jovial and forgiving mood. He was taking the organization west to make a picture, King of Jazz. The Rhythm Boys would be in it and, he said, Bing would have a solo.

Production of the picture had no more than started on the Universal lot in Hollywood when Bing got involved in an auto smashup. The cops told him to appear in court three days later and advised him to plead guilty to reckless driving and take a fine. Bing was as complacent as a cow the day he walked into court. He had come from the golf course and had on a bright orange sweater, green knickers and checkered socks. The gentleman on the bench was a visiting judge from Santa Ana.

"The arresting officer says you had been drinking," said the judge.

"Quite," said cocksure Crosby.

"Are you familiar with the prohibition law?"

"Only remotely."

"Well," said the judge, "you have exactly thirty days in which to familiarize yourself with it."

He was locked up in the old Lincoln Heights jail and, for a reason that remains unexplained to this day, made no attempt to communicate with anyone. Three days passed and Whiteman telephoned Everett Crosby and asked the whereabouts of his songbird. Everett, still working as a truck salesman, went searching and eventually arrived at the jail.

"You got a fellow in here named Crosby?" he asked. The cop at the desk beamed.

"Oh," he said, "you mean our silver-plated baritone. Sure, he's right inside."

Through the bars Everett saw Bing lithely going about the work of waiting on table for the rest of the prisoners and singing My Suppressed Desire as he skittered the tin plates over the wood. When he saw Everett he flung himself against the bars and began demanding the great outdoors. Everett wanted to know why he hadn't communicated with anyone.

"Don't stand there and argue with me!" shouted Bing. "Get me out of this can!"

Back at Universal, Whiteman told Everett to get Bing out at any cost, so Everett went to see a police captain he knew in Hollywood. It would be possible to have Bing transferred from Lincoln Heights to the Hollywood jail and, while he couldn't be absolved of his sentence, an arrangement could be effected whereby he would be let out, under police escort, during working hours.

The deal was made. The Hollywood captain promised to have Bing transferred on the morning of the day he was to sing Song of the Dawn for the sound cameras. He assured Everett that he would rush Bing to the studio the moment he got him in custody.

Everett and Whiteman and several studio executives waited through the morning. Whiteman was in a fury and Everett spoke frequently of the manner in which he was going to maim and lacerate his brother. Noon came and soon after that Everett happened to glance down the studio street.

"Up the street came a guy," he remembers. "He had on blue denims and there was a dirty towel around his neck and he had a four-day growth of beard. And, so help me, he was sauntering! He was sauntering up the street, ahead of a cop, as though he didn't have a worry in the world."

Whiteman simply stared at him for a while, then said:

"If it wouldn't be too boresome for you, son, you might step over to the sound stage and watch John Boles doing Song of the Dawn."

It was true. At the last minute they had called in Boles and given him the Crosby song. Loss of the solo spot was disheartening, but Bing didn't grieve for long. He served out his sentence at the Hollywood jail in an atmosphere of musical-comedy high jinks. It was required of him that he arise each morning at six and sweep out the jail. After that he was permitted to leave, always in the company of the uniformed policeman. This cop turned out to be an amiable soul who had lived for years in Hollywood without ever having seen the inside of a movie studio. Now that he was given free run of the Universal lot, he behaved as though he owed Bing a debt of gratitude. He insisted on paying for lunch each day.

"Let this be an end of referring to Private Lucy as a tidal wave."

Bing was released and, in time, the Whiteman picture was completed. The Rhythm Boys fared poorly in the final product and the public got no more than a few brief glimpses of them.

Late in 1940 a movie grind house in New York advertised: BING CROSBY IN KING OF JAZZ.

Whiteman's band played a few dates on the Coast and then prepared for the return to New York. The Rhythm Boys called a conference. Bing had become a confirmed Californian and carried only unhappy memories of New York. He was convinced that he and his teammates could best advance their fortunes around Los Angeles. Then, too, he had recently become acquainted with a blond actress.

He had been sitting one night in the Coconut Grove when his friend, Dick Keene, a young actor on the Fox lot, walked in with a blond ingénue named Dixie Lee. He introduced her to Bing, and Bing felt butterflies inside of him.

Dixie was born Wilma Wyatt, in Harriman, Tennessee. Her parents moved to Chicago when she was a child, and there, as Dixie Lee, she won a blues singing contest sponsored by Ruth Etting and became Miss Etting's understudy for a time. After that came a part in a Broadway musical, then a contract to make pictures. She had by no means reached stardom in films at the time she met Bing, but she was rising. When she began going around with him, her friends warned her against him as a bad investment. Sol Wurtzel, a Fox producer, called her in and lectured her sternly.

"Dixie," he said, "you'd better give that fellow up, because if you marry

him you'll have to support him for the rest of your life."

The Rhythm Boys divorced themselves from Whiteman and stayed in Hollywood. They made a few recordings, appeared now and then on local radio stations, and sang in small clubs. Bing was no longer indifferent about money. He wanted to marry Dixie, but Dixie was drawing a nice salary and beginning to make a name for herself, whereas he was only coasting.

"If I married her now," he told Al Rinker, "I'd be known around town as Mr. Lee."

Conditions improved momentarily for the Rhythm Boys when they went to work in the Coconut Grove. Their singing was immensely popular with the Hollywood night-club set, but there were times when they just didn't show up. They were docked as much as two weeks' salary at a clip and Bing failed to get the master-of-ceremonies job that had been promised him.

The Golden East

Disconsolate over these reverses and angry with himself, he was sitting one night back of the Grove bandstand, talking with Rinker and Barris.

"What I need," he said, "is some responsibility—somebody to look out for, and somebody to look out for me. I think I'd better get married."

He proposed to Dixie over a plate of fried chicken. She told him she was all for it, but that if she gave up her career for Bing, he'd have to knuckle down, cut out the foolishness.

They were married the next day—September 29, 1930. From that day forward Bing Crosby ceased to be the playboy of the western shore.

Soon after the marriage Everett Crosby quit selling trucks and took over as Bing's manager. It was a major engineering job to get Bing away from Hollywood, where he was now making musical shorts for Mack Sennett, but Everett finally argued him into a trip to New York, where he negotiated a contract for Bing's appearance on the CBS network. From there on it was easy. Bing was an immediate hit, played twenty solid weeks in the same Paramount Theater where he and Al Rinker had flopped, and was signed for a starring role in a feature picture—Big Broadcast of 1932.

He became a star with his first picture and Everett set up offices for "Bing Crosby Ltd., Inc." in Bing's dressing room at Paramount. John O'Melveny, one of California's top lawyers, was brought into the Crosby enterprises. Before long Bing fetched Harry and Kate Crosby down from Spokane and set them up in a home near his own. Larry Crosby, working as an advertising man in Seattle, came down to join the Crosby home front. One of the girls, Catherine, moved to Hollywood as the wife of E. J. Mullins, a produce broker. Mary Rose Crosby is married to William Miller, a San Francisco glass manufacturer; the six-foot baby of the family, Bob, has his own orchestra, and Ted Crosby—who became the father of twin girls two months before Bing's twin boys were born—is the sole Crosby remaining in Spokane. He is in charge of publicity and personnel for the Washington Water Power Company.

The Crosbys are a close-knit clan, standing one for all and all for one. If it can be said that any one member of the family rules the rest, that one is not Bing, nor Everett, but Kate Crosby. She is in her middle sixties and fully as alert and vigorous as she was twenty years ago. She and her husband live in a modest bungalow in North Hollywood, eight blocks from Bing's big house. To this day Kate Crosby refuses to hire a maid and does her own housework. She cooks and sews and gardens just as she did in Spokane and she is the official custodian of Crosbyana, having kept Bing's scrapbooks for years.

Kate Crosby is a devout woman. Back in the Spokane days it was her custom whenever trouble confronted any member of the family to scurry for the Poor Clare monastery, where she would ask for prayers of intercession. She made such visits at all crucial moments in Bing's early career, and nowadays, when troublous situations arise, she writes the Poor Clares, asking for prayers.

She has consistently frowned upon drinking, smoking and card playing, and only in recent years have her sons dared to use tobacco in her presence. In spite of her moralistic restraints, however, a peculiar thing has happened to her. She has become a horse player.

When Bing first began acquiring a stable of race horses, his mother wasn't happy about it. As time went on and his racing interests widened, the other members of the family became horse-happy. Kate Crosby found that they talked of little else. She began following the activities of Bing's horses and before long she was going to the tracks to have a look at them running. Today she can talk expertly about early foot, overlays, straight pasterns and jockeys' bugs, and occasionally she comes right out and says dam.

Until California racing was discontinued it was her custom to spend hours doping the races. Bing maintained a box for her at all the tracks around Hollywood and, in season, she could be found there almost daily. She sat with all the handicappers' selections plus her own extensive calculations and wagered no more than two dollars a race.

Everett continues as Bing's manager. Half the con men and crackpots of the nation have tried, at one time or another, to nibble at the golden flow of Crosby money; Everett is the man who throws them out. He has probably scraped through the surface of more gold bricks than any other man in Hollywood. One of his perennial customers is an inventor who wants to sell Bing a grandstand for the Del Mar race track. It is no ordinary grandstand. When the horses leave the barrier, the grandstand takes off with them, riding on tracks, and travels abreast the pack right around to the finish line.

An Invisible Office

Larry Crosby is called Bing's director of public relations and as such handles those projects which tend to build good will—the Army camp entertainments, for example, and the annual Bing Crosby Amateur-Professional Golf Tournament, which has become one of the Pacific Coast's major sporting events.

Pop Crosby works along with Everett and Larry, supervising the fanmail department, handling the checkbooks and serving as a sort of liaison officer between the office and Bing.

The Crosby offices are on the top floor of the three-storied Crosby Building, which stands on the Sunset Strip. The $80,000 building was erected six years ago, and among its noteworthy features is the absence of an office for Bing Crosby. The owner doesn't visit the offices more than twice a year, though he often stops in the building to get himself steamed out at the Finnish baths which occupy part of the ground floor.

Bing's personal office travels with him. His major interests—movies, radio, recordings, golf and horses—keep him on the move, and the Crosbys on Sunset Boulevard sometimes have difficulty running him to earth. Pop Crosby is the courier. When Everett or Larry cannot reach Bing by telephone, Pop climbs into his car and goes questing. He is a sturdy man, in the neighborhood of seventy, and he loves to take a golf club and bat a ball around the fairways, so he is always happiest when he suspects he'll find Bing at Lakeside—six miles removed from the Crosby Building. He'll drive to Lakeside and whack the ball around until he locates Bing. Then he'll hand over memoranda from Everett or Larry. Bing reads it, scribbles his instructions on the back, and Pop bats the ball back to the clubhouse and returns to the office.

Much of the Crosby business is transacted in this fashion. Pop Crosby has another regular assignment. Each evening he gathers up unsigned checks, letters, contracts and the like and on his way home stops off at Bing's house and leaves the day's accumulation of desk work. During the evening Bing goes through this stuff, signing things, penciling notes, approving some proposals and vetoing others. On the following morning Pop picks up the portfolio and returns it to the office.

Bing's home, an imposing fourteen-room structure of colonial aspect with high white pillars at the front, is called "The Library" by the brothers. Back of the house are a swimming pool and tennis court. One wing of the building is devoted to the four children, whose nurse prepares all their food in a special kitchen. The twins have quarters in which everything is duplicated, even the plumbing.

The family life centers around a rumpus room and Bing's library. He acquires books for the purpose of reading them. He likes Somerset Maugham, Aldous Huxley, Ernest Hemingway, Ring Lardner and John Steinbeck. On occasion he'll read poetry without being clubbed into it, and sometimes he dips into Shakespeare.

An Old-Fashioned Father

The big living room is closed off most of the year. Dixie throws it open only for Christmas and a few other special occasions. The Crosbys do little entertaining, and a party at Bing's is a rare event. Early-to-bed is a rule he seldom violates. He likes to be up and moving by seven o'clock and his before-breakfast ritual includes a romp with the kids. He calls them "the Irishers" and he says he can't stand being around them more than thirty minutes at a stretch because they wear him down. One of their favorite games is called "Beating Up on Daddy."

Bing is the kind of parent who shakes his head in bewilderment when he contemplates the luxuries enjoyed by his sons. He thinks back to the hard days when all the Crosby boys had to go out and scratch for their spending money. He's an old-fashioned father in most respects, and when one of the Irishers gets out of hand Bing never hesitates to turn the miscreant upside down and warm his breeches. Moreover, he doesn't believe in fancy private schools and sends his boys to a parochial school in North Hollywood.

Dixie Lee Crosby has her hands full shepherding the four rambunctious boys, supervising the household, getting in her war work and filling social engagements. She retired from the screen when she was married, but four years later, after the twins came, she accepted the feminine lead in a Paramount picture. Then she switched over to her old studio, Fox, to appear in Redheads on Parade. She changed from a blonde to a redhead in this film and Bing liked the effect so well that she remained a redhead for several years. Dixie shares her husband's interest in the outdoor life, is an excellent swimmer, likes horseback riding and plays a snappy game of tennis.

Bing's preoccupation with sports, both as participant and as spectator, amounts to a passion. He is easily one of the best golfers in Hollywood and a few years back was made a life member of the Professional Golfers Association. He qualified once in the National Amateur and he loves the game so heartily that he often rises before dawn, on working days, and goes alone to Lakeside to get in nine holes before breakfast. His golfing umbrella was for years a familiar sight on the Lakeside course, for he'd never let rain interrupt his game. Gene Sarazen once said that if he applied himself, Bing could easily develop into another Bobby Jones.

Baseball, football, boxing and other sports command his attention, but horse racing is his major passion. He began following the horses in the days when he worked for Paul Whiteman. In 1935 he claimed a horse named Miss Flip at Santa Anita and began his career as an owner and breeder. Since then he has established his own stables and is a partner with Lindsay Howard, son of C. S. Howard, in a larger enterprise operating under the name of Binglin Stock Farm. The Crosby racing colors, taken from his old theme song—When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day—are blue and gold.

Seven years ago Bing acquired his country estate at Rancho Santa Fe, about thirty-five miles north of the Mexican border and a three-hour drive from Hollywood. The property is part of one of the old Spanish grants, and two of the original adobe houses were still standing when Bing bought it. These have been converted into guest houses, a main house has been built, and there are barns for the Crosby horses as well as a swimming pool and tennis courts. It is Bing's ambition to breed and train a Kentucky Derby winner at his ranch. His trainer is Albert Johnson, once one of the nation's foremost jockeys. Johnson came originally from Spokane and was at the peak of his career when Bing was a youngster. He was always, after that, something of a hero to Bing, and when the need for a trainer arose, Johnson was called in.

The Del Mar race track is four miles from the Crosby ranch and Bing is president and chief stockholder of the corporation which holds a ten-year lease on the plant. It was a profitable enterprise up until America entered the war. Since the California racing blackout it has served as a training base for United States Marines.

There was a time when Bing did considerable in the way of plunging at the race tracks, but no more. He seldom bets more than ten dollars a race nowadays. He is not above playing hunches since the day, back in the 1930's, when he spotted a horse named Bingo, running at Latonia. Bing put two dollars on Bingo, and Bingo paid back forty to one.

Secondhand Fame

In September of 1941, during his vacation from radio and pictures, Bing decided on a trip to South America, where he and Lin Howard have an interest in a stock ranch. Wherever he went in South America he was given a tumultuous reception. On his return he denied that he was popular among South Americans because of his singing.

"I was chiefly famous," he said, "as the owner of the champion three-year-old filly, Blackie. A nice horse, too, but unfortunately she's the property of Bob Howard. It seems Bob had neglected to ship his colors south and Blackie had been running under my silks. On the golf links, in cafés, in hotel lobbies, I was hailed as Señor Crosby, owner of Blackie. I was a bigger man because of this reputation than if I had won the last three Academy Awards in a row."

Bing gets back sometimes to his native Northwest. In 1937 the whole Crosby tribe, plus the Crosby radio show, descended on Spokane for a glorious week end. Bing was made honorary mayor, Gonzaga gave him an honorary Ph.D., and banners screaming Welcome Home, Bing were strung across Riverside Avenue. People came from hundreds of miles around for the Crosby festival and Bing raised $20,000 for Gonzaga's scholarship fund.

Says Everett: "They tell me that Spokane had the biggest bank clearings in the city's history that week end."

Everett always sees the practical side of things.

BING CROSBY 1904-1977

The Melody Lingers

By DAVID HINCKLEY
Daily News Staff Writer

"IT'S MY HUNCH," BING CROSby wrote in 1953, "most men feel that if they had gotten the opportunities I've had, they could have done just as well. I don't doubt there's a lot of truth in that." Right.

Harry Lillis Crosby, born May 2, 1904, in Tacoma, Wash., and nicknamed Bing after a comic character, died of a heart attack 10 years ago today as he left the 18th green of a Spanish golf course. He had shot an 85. No public figure was more widely wished such a relatively benign passing.

Moreover, from a fan's standpoint, what was endearing about Bing survives his death as easily as he crooned "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day." Bing Crosby *was* the priest in "Going My Way"; he was Jim Hardy breaking your heart with "White Christmas" in "Holiday Inn." Son Gary called him tyrant and we shrugged. Truth is, Bing had it right: He was what we all wanted to be, and felt in our best moments we were.

This is an anniversary, then, to mark quietly. The Bing Crosby Library, which he gave to Gonzaga University in Spokane 30 years ago and where thousands come each year to look over his life, plans no special programs. In Tacoma, Bing Crosby Historical Society founder Ken Twiss says his group focuses on long-term projects: its music-and-memorabilia gallery, a musical revue in 1988 and, maybe someday, buying the Crosby house.

In New York, Crosby fan Rich Conaty is playing "Mostly Bing" this month on his Sunday Big Broadcast shows over WFUV (90.7 FM, 9 to 11 p.m.). Engineer/fan Michael Brooks is preparing a four-LP Crosby set for Columbia's Jazz Masterpieces series.

In England, where love for Bing runs deep, a single and triple album are out and the ninth LP in a 24-volume limited-edition pressing of *all* Crosby recordings is expected soon. This series is "flawless," Twiss says—and hard to find. (Contact the Society at P.O. Box 216, Tacoma, Wash. 98401.)

For a guy who called himself lazy and lucky, Crosby left an imprint approached by few. "In the '30s," says Conaty, "he invented what the popular singer was." For instance, he was among the first to realize that electronic amplification (microphones) allowed a new style of public singing—more relaxed, casual, intimate. Are these adjectives familiar?

"In a way, he *was* lucky," says Conaty. "He came along at the right time for amplified sound, talkies and network radio. But he had to do something with all of it."

His method underscores his brilliance; on record as in movies, he absorbed a lot to make it look easy. To the end he retained traces of jazz, of trio singing, of Jolson. What he learned, he saved.

"That's why my favorite records are the ones he made in the '70s," says Twiss. "He had less voice, but there was a warmth and richness." This from a man who discovered Crosby in 1931. "It was the Depression," Twiss recalls. "There wasn't much money. So I'd browse in second-hand shops, and I found so many Bing records I figured there must be something to him

"There was."

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CASSETTE LIBRARY - NEW ADDITIONS
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We are happy to announce that three new cassettes have been added to the club library in recent times. Two from Johnny Joyce and one from Ken Merry - both UK collectors.

JJ 14 (from John Joyce) features 4 1950's radio broadcasts with Buddy Cole in a series called "The Navy Swings".

JJ 15 (from Ken Merry) features Alan Dale's 10th anniversary tribute to Bing broadcast on the BBC last October, plus a couple of other items.

JJ 16 (from John Joyce) features songs from Bing & Rosie Clooney with the Buddy Cole trio from the late 50's to the early 60's.

A special thank you to John and Ken for their trouble and their interest.

****
INTERNATIONAL FUND-RAISING RAFFLE FOR ALL MEMBERS
****

One prize for Australian members - one prize for overseas members

We recently purchased two copies of Tim Morgereth's wonderful book: "Bing Crosby - A Discography, Radio Program List and Filmography".

This hard cover, professionally-printed publication of over 500 pages lists: a) Every commercial recording of Bings from 1926 to 1956
b) All known radio appearances (including songs and guest artists where available) from 1928 to 1954
c) Titles, credits and casts of all Crosby shorts and features from 1930 to 1964.

HOW YOU CAN WIN

All members around the world can enter.

Australian members, please buy tickets at our film evenings or by mail. Cost per ticket: $5.00.

American, South American, Japanese members, please remit payment of $5.00 US per ticket to Mark Scrimger.

British and European members, please remit payment of two pounds 50p to Keith Parkinson, for each ticket required.

(I realize that the prices for overseas members don't equate to $5 Australian, but this was the easiest way to cost the tickets)

Overseas members will not receive a ticket, but their names will be forwarded direct to me (Bob Machliss) and I will write their names on tickets and hold them until the night of the draw which will take place at our film evening on Monday, AUG 22th, 1988. Closing date for ticket purchases is Friday AUG 15th for overseas members and Friday AUG 11th for Australian members in the country or interstate. Members who attend the film evening may still purchase them on the night.

ENTER NOW! WE HAVE ONE COPY OF TIM'S BOOK FOR AUSTRALIAN MEMBERS AND ONE FOR OVERSEAS MEMBERS. AS EACH BOOK IS WORTH AROUND US$50.00, $5.00 IS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY. AND YOUR CLUB NEEDS THE MONEY!

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BITS 'N' PIECES

* Colourization of old movies continues unabated. The interesting news for us is that BELLS OF ST MARYS has been so re-processed in the USA. (See ad elsewhere in the magazine.) Also in colour, for interest sake, is 42ND STREET (the original) while in Australia, the classic slient movie THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE has also been colourized! Where will it end?

* Melbourne now has a vintage radio shop. Called Resurrection Radio, it is located at 14 Chapel St, Prahran, Melbourne. Better be quick if you want to see it! I can't imagine that it will last all that long!

* The original MERRY CHRISTMAS lp is now on CD on a German import. MCA label, retitled (more logically) WHITE CHRISTMAS. Only $17.99.

* Ken Henderson of the Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre (See New Releases) now has a machine to transfer 16mm movies to video. Check with Ken for prices.

* Sad news is that our good freind in the UK, Frank Murphy, suffered another heart attack last December. Lets hope that Frank is on the mend.

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MEET THE MEMBERS
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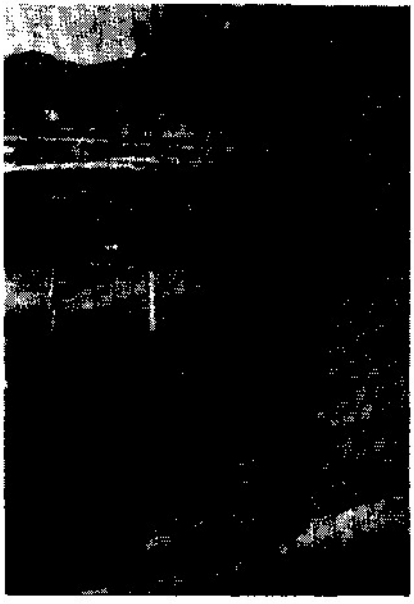


BOB SCHRADER, 20 Harris Road,
Solomontown, Port Pirie,
South Australia 5549.

Bob writes:

Some years ago, I bought a T-shirt from Pal Photo Shirts, which, as you can see, features a photo of Bing which I gave them.

I have worn this shirt once only (it is a size 18) and it is a pity to have it hanging in the wardrobe when someone else could be making use of it.

Therefore, I am prepared to give this shirt to anyone would loan me their original video tape or send me a copy of one of Bing's Christmas specials or Bing's 50th anniversary TV special.

Please write first, though.

CLIFF BRISBOIS, 5699 Kanan Road,
Agoura, California, 91301, USA.

Cliff writes:

1987 was the year our son Blake discovered the beach...a place he constantly begged to frequent. So on several occasions, we made the twenty minute motor trip to Zuma Beach to play in the sand and water and chase the seagulls.

However, Blake's favourite indoor haunt is still "Chuck-E-Cheese". For this reason, we celebrated numerous events, including Blake's 3rd Birthday in this funhouse/ pizza parlour.

In mid-March, we met our pen pals from Wigan, England, Frank and Irene Ashurst. We spent our first day together at Disneyland and the second day touring the Crosby landmarks.

SEND US YOUR PICTURE

Would you like to appear in this new feature "Meet the Members" ? Just send us a photograph of yourself, colour or black and white, preferably in reasonable close-up, plus a little about yourself and your Crosby interest, and we'll feature it on these pages. Club address, inside front cover.

Still no sign of the Tenth Anniversary Collection in Australia. However, to wet your appetite, here's an advertising poster from the UK for the set. In the USA, the records have been retitled THE COMPLETE BING CROSBY and on the oppos ite page you can see an advertisement from that country.

There was only *one* Bing Crosby . . .
There is only *one* Collection like this!

73 of Bing's Favorites never before heard with amazing digital clarity —on 3 Records, 3 Cassettes or 3 Compact Discs!

RECORD ONE

Love Is the Sweetest Thing
True Love
So Rare
Chances Are
(Love Is) The Tender Trap
Meet Me Tonight In Dreamland
Heartaches by the Number
I Wish You Love
Jyes Around The Corner
Try a Little Tenderness
Unchained Melody
Yours
Misty
You Turned the Tables on Me
Don't Take Your Love From Me
We'll Be Together Again
Just You, Just Me
Come Rain or Come Shine
She's Funny That Way
At Sundown
Little Man You've had a Busy Day
Count Your Blessings
Loves Old Sweet Song
Let's Put Out the Lights and Go to Sleep

RECORD TWO

Straight Down the Middle
Isle of Capri
Walkin' for the Evenin' Mail
You're In Kentucky
Don't Blame Me
I Can't Get Started
Ain't Misbehavin
When the Red Red Robin Comes Bob-Bob-Bobbin' Along
Way Down Yonder in New Orleans
Moonglow & Theme From Picnic
Sunday
When my Baby Smiles at Me
Yes Sir That's My Baby
At that Jazz Band Ball
Old Cape Cod
Keepin' Out of Mischief
The Banjo's Back in Town
Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone
Crazy Rhythm
Smiles
This Can't Be Love
Margie
Papa Loves Mambo
'Deed I Do

RECORD THREE

Manhattan
My Baby Just Cares For Me
Anything Goes
All Through The Night
You're The Top
I Guess I'll have to Change My Plan
New Sun in the Sky
Mandy
My Ideal
It's Alright with Me
How Long Has This Been Going On?
I've Got a Crush on You
What is There to Say
Where or When
The Lady is a Tramp
My Funny Valentine
Nice Work if You Can Get It
What is This Thing Called Love
I See Your Face Before Me
I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face
You'll Never Know
It's Not For Me To Say
You're Sensational
They Didn't Believe Me
We're In The Money

. . . The most popular artist of his time . . . known by billions around the world . . . there was only one Bing Crosby! It's been ten years since Bing Crosby left us but the love of his music and films lives on. Now you can own the **complete Bing Crosby music collection** . . . 73 of Bings favorites . . . made affordable by Silver Eagle Records. Songs like "True Love", "We're In The Money", "You're The Top", plus much, much more - offered for the first time in one fabulous collection. **Three high quality Records** or **three double-length Cassettes** can be yours for the amazing, low price of only $19.95, or **three Compact Discs** for only $29.95. These are the same songs as recorded by Bing between 1954 and 1957 at the height of his career . . . digitally combined with the sound of full orchestral accompaniment using 1980's technology. The result is Bing Crosby with a quality and clarity you've **never heard before**. Order today . . . supplies of this priceless, one of a kind collection are limited. **"The Complete Bing Crosby, 10th Anniversary Collection"**—music that's guaranteed to stir your fondest memories!

SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED SO ORDER NOW!

SILVER EAGLE RECORDS, INC.
535 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

MAIL TO
Dept. RS-6622

Yes, please rush me **"The Complete Bing Crosby."** I understand that I may return it for any reason whatsoever for up to 1 year, and receive a full refund.

3 ALBUMS $19.95 **3 CASSETTE TAPES $19.95** **3 COMPACT DISCS $29.95**

Add $3.50 for postage & handling. New York State Residents add sales tax.

_____ ALBUM SET(S) _____ CASSETTE SET (S) _____ COMPACT DISC SET(S)

(Make check or money order payable to: Silver Eagle Records, Inc.)
Or bill my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA ☐ American Express

Account No. Exp. Date

Name Signature

Address

City State Zip

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

If you're not absolutely thrilled and delighted, simply return the records within 1 year for a full refund. No questions asked.

NEW RELEASES

THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY - VOL 9 (1929-30) Jonzo (UK) JZ9

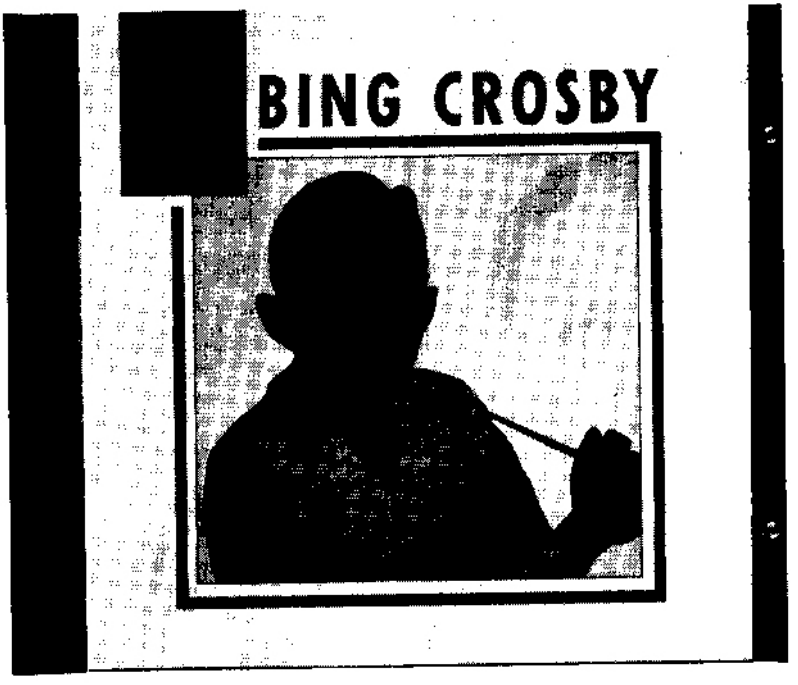
In case you missed it elsewhere in the magazine, Ken Henderson of the Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre has taken over the importing of the Chronological series to Australia. Ken is quite happy to supply interstate members by mail. Write for for details. The address is 348 Centre Road, Bentleigh, Victoria and if you'd like to ring Ken, his number is (03) 557 1050. Please note that this society can no longer supply members direct.

Meantime, onto Volume 9. This record completes the Whiteman era tracks very neatly. It ranges from I'M A DREAMER, AREN'T WE ALL (Oct 16, 1929) to THREE LITTLE WORDS (August 26th, 1930) with the Ellington Orchestra. Most interesting track (from a collectors point of view) is MOONLIGHT AND ROSES/ MOONLIGHT BAY which was recorded on October 18th, 1929 as a companion piece to the once unissued SOUTHERN MEDLEY. Whether this is a Crosby track is debateable, but it's good to have it on disc at last. Speaking of that, JZ 9 marks the first time that all of Bing's Whiteman period has been on LP. If you're debating whether to get the disc or not, don't. The early issues in the series are a total sellout and many collectors who did not buy at the time are now desperately after copies. If nothing else, buy it as an investment. In a year or two, you won't be sorry.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY VOL 10 (1930 - 31) Jonzo (UK) JZ9

Volume 10 in the John McNicholas cavalcade of Crosby covers all of Bing's Arnhiem period plus his first four tracks recorded in Los Angeles for Brunswick. From FOOL ME SOME MORE (Oct 19, 1930) to JUST ONE MORE CHANCE (May 4, 1931). One of the real pleasures of this series is the excellent sleeve notes from Colin Pugh. Every track is discussed and analysed. One example: IT MUST BE TRUE. "Harry Barris must surely be numbered among the great composers of popular music with melodies like the one he composed for this song. With some excellent teamwork on the part of Gus Arnhiem and Gordon Clifford who wrote the lyrics, this must rank in the top four tracks of the album. A bright, light arrangement by Jimmy Grier is taken by the band at a nice steady tempo and the good solid performance make it a track worth listening to even without a vocal refrain. To this add Bing's impeccable two-stanze vocal chorus immediately followed by another full chorus of his finest whistling to date and you have a recording which is difficult to fault. His vocal reprise of the final stanza is taken with command and assurance."

Another of the delights of the record covers are the early photographs that John has managed to dig up, some familiar, some not so familiar. Volume 10 also features three of the sheet music covers from the Arnhiem sides.



BING CROSBY - BEST 22 SONGS - MCA (Japan) 35XD-501

We mentioned this new CD from MCA in Japan last issue and we're happy to say that we now have a copy. Quality is excellent, no echo, no fake stereo, and best of all, virtually all the tracks are new to CD. I won't list them again. If you'd like to know the contents, check our last issue.

BLACK MOONLIGHT - Joy (UK) D 290

Haven't heard this one but the contents is early 30's Bing: Black Moonlight, Just one more chance, How deep is the ocean, Song of the islands, Our big love scene, May I, Out of nowhere, Brother can you spare a dime, Lazy Day, Goodnight sweetheart, Stardust, Try a little tenderness, Sweet Georgia Brown, Once in a blue monn, Snuggled on your shoulder, If you should ever need me, Home on the range, Where the blue of the night.

BING CROSBY: REMEMBERING - Conifer (UK) CHD-123

Yet another compilation of frequently re-issued tracks: Please, Did you ever see a dream walking, I've got the world on a string, Sweet Georgia Brow, A Ghost of a chance, My honey's lovin' arms, Down the old ox road, How deep is the ocean, Temptation. St Louis blues, Dinah, Somebody stole Gabriel's horn, Stay on the right side of the road, Someday sweetheart, Some of these days, Shine. I'm coming Virginia, There's a cabin in the pines.

BING CROSBY - FROM BING'S PERSONAL COLLECTION - Crosbyana Vol 6 - Broadway BR136

Crosbyana Vol 6 is a unqiue recording due to the fact that each selection is from Bing's personal collection. Members of "Bing's Friends and Collectors Society" were able to obtain the material when it was placed on auction several years ago.

Side 1 features a combination of commercial recordings and Bing's Television specials including the Hollywood Palace.

Side 2 contains mostly non-commercial recordings that Bing made for his friends to commemorate various hunting and fishing trips. These songs show another side to Bing Crosby as he wrote the words for each one.

Side 1

The new Ashmolean Marching Society, The Music of Home, It's a good day, A scarf a stool a song and imagination, Love makes the world go round, I left my heart in San Francisco, Aloha means I love you, Pennies from heaven, Mandy, What do we do with the world, Medley - the Straight life/Little green apples.

Side 2

Xmas ad for the Salvation Army, Xmas greetings from Bing, Shooting quail at Horseshoe, It's lovely at Palm Beach, Hunting in Texas, Antham of the clams, African Safari.

This record is available from Broadway Intermission records, PO Box 100, Brighton, Mi. 48116 USA. Quoted cost (inc surface mail) is a very reasonable US $4.25!

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TRADING POST

JACK HIGGINSON 10 Holly Ave, Hollwell, Qld 4216 Australia is still chasing the following Bing's Hollywood albums:

FL 30913, 30914, 30846, 30968, 30843, 30844, 30841, 30916 and 30947.

Although these are the Aust. numbers, I presume that any releases would satisfy Jack.

.....

GLEN HAEGELE, 130 Princeton Rd, Audubon, New Jersey 08106, USA, has for sale:

8 original colour movie mag. photos of Bing, 8 x 11, ex. condition, from the late 40's.

1 portrait sketch by Samuel Cohan, 8 x 11, ex. cond. Late 40's.

2 arcade photocards from the earl;y 50's "Then and Now" series. 3½ x 5½. ex cond. Rare. Both same.

THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S

THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S.

Bing Crosby, Ingrid Bergman, Barry Fitzgerald. Unforgettable classic about an easy-going priest engaged in a battle of wits with an iron-willed nun in charge of a troubled parochial school **Now in Color.** (1945) 126 min.

VHS 781379
BETA 781360

Only $24.95

-ALSO-
-DON'T MISS THE B&W ORIGINAL-
VHS V05983 BETA V05975
ONLY $24.95

GOING MY WAY. Bing Crosby, Barry Fitzgerald. Winner of 3 Academy Awards. Nostalgic, heartwarming story of the stormy relationship between an aging pastor and the young priest picked to succeed him. B&W. (1944). 126 min. Was $39.95

VHS 727528 **BETA 72751X**

Now Only $19.95

VERN TAYLOR'S CROSBY PROFILES

GORDON WALL - 1

Gordon Wall is Australia's best-known, least-known Crosby collector. Hopefully, the following article will help to rectify that situation.

We actually have two profiles on Gordon. The first penned by Vern, the second by South Australian, John Starr.

The above photograph shows Gordon Wall at the time of his punishment for trying to pass off a Ray Noble orchestration as being from the Kraft Music Hall.

The illustration below is Gordon Wall by Gordon Wall. Readers are invited to to draw their own conclusions.

The Australians will tell you that Americans are a lot like themselves, while the American, if he chances to consider that anyone may be similiar to himself, will easily agree. (However, in Texas, there hasn't been a kind word about anybody else since it seceded from the Union and tried to go it alone.) There are some Aussies that are like nobody, anywhere; unique unto themselves, these exotic birds defy comparison. Gordon Wall, beyond observable doubt, is one of them. He may grumble and mutter when he reads this and if he does, he will only be proving the point. He has come a long way, done many and varied worthwhile things for the other collectors of Bing Crosby and still makes a bald-faced attempt to pass himself off as ordinary. Like Bing, himself, he could be in danger of convincing those who listen to him but it is doubtful he will ever manage very well with those who know him.

This collector has known Wall for thirty-seven years and has no silly misguided reluctance to illustrate this statement. Long before most of us did anything more than spin Bing records on a Sunday afternoon or drop a gossipy note to a 'pen-pal' about our latest aquisition, this modest, strongly self-effacing person was loading the boats and airplanes out of Australia with questions, inquiries, cajoles and veiled threats to anyone he suspected had a Crosby that he did not have. First it must have been England, then the USA and later the whole thundering world saw his airmail flimsies floating down to their postbpxes.

Fortunately, Gordon was then, as he still is, a wonderfully generous soul and, more important, a man of his word. If he made you a promise, he kept it, though he was well-aware it could cost you time and thousands to track him down if he did not. He built that excellent reputation in a time when less devoted Crosby collectors too often allowed things to slide or did not work very hard at maintaining trade relations. As a group, Australians are second-to-none in their zeal for Bing Crosby but Gordon always went that extra mile and, in the process, cunningly made himself almost indispensible to his eager, panting foreign contacts. The chosen among us hung, as it were, on his lip , watching for our postmen bearing boxes marked 'from G. Wall'. Lifelong positive impressions were made by him. Some of us have actually kept every record , every picture, even every letter written in that astonishingly tiny (though still quite legible) hand. Riffling through the old mementos, the years seem never to have happened. We profited from his innate collector's acumen, and his remarkable success in locating Crosby records.

As far as it can be learned, he was the first to provide 'Bing' on privately-made 78's, then the 45's, sleeved with pastal coloured folders and faced with his clever line drawings. Ten-inch LP's (called microgrooves) before the USA ever heard of the 33 speed as a popular form of record-play, came next. His large collection of the twelve-inch standards still has no comparison, in or out of the industry, so carefully did he produce them. "The best damn Bings that ever shuffled down the pike," a Texas airline pilot told me, who was after my own sacred 'Gordon Walls'. Crosby, himself, said as much during one of the Pro-Am Golf Tournaments, to a visiting Aussie collector, but Bing, like Gordon, was exercising his modesty at the moment. Those of us who happen to own these truly splendid examples of the record-maker's art rightfully consider ourself s among the Crosby collector immortals.

Of course, Wall became the Number One collector, and why not? In an age when such ecomiums are thought of as gauche, we still need to make the statement, to make it very clear where the stepping stones lie under the water and who helped place them there.

Gordon's private life reflects his strong beliefs in the fine qualities engendered by the mystique of the Crosby Attitude, for he seems to have made a similiar success there as well. Today he live a country squire's existance. He has a pleasant home close beside a handy golf-course where he daily practices several other Crosby traits picked up along his way, wearing a Bing-like hat (which must improve his game somehow, I am sure) and playing a good round.

He is an adamant man, strong in his convictions, and he is capable of talking over your conversation if he decides to make you hear him when he says that his wife, Joy, is better at the Scottish pastime than he is. I shall not presume to dispute him. Likely he knows what he is talking about here, as well. She is the first of his loyalties and has the prior claim on his considerations, and apart from all else, he knows his facts before he uses them. Beyond that, it should be said that Bing preceded Joy, to her occasional chagrin and he can still get in the way, but together, the Walls represent much that is still Bing Crosby in Australia.

On their several junkets abroad they have included the USA and our old house in some of them. The memories around here are still reverberating. If Gordon dwelled in this land, we really would not need all the 'authorities' we presently endure in collecting Bing (Everybody is an expert). If he was so questionably endued as to live in London, Ralph Harding might very well have given up and moved to Wales much sooner than he did. If Gordon Wall had happened to dwell anywhere else, Australia would surely not be precisely the mecca for Bing-Collecting that it is.

These paragraphs may strike some at least as a trifle hyperbolic and their strong words and decided opinions as, perhaps, somewhat over-emphatic, but, be assured, every line bears the weight of irrefutable, very provable truth.

Nowadays, Mr Wall believes that collecting and watching Bing films on videocassette is the only way to fly. "The world is changing", he recently wrote to an old friend, "people want to see Bing as well as hear him." Could be, but it is doubtful if Gordon Wall will ever change. The wide-ranged ocnfraternity of Crosby collectors owes much that it can never possibly repay to Gordon and whatever the future holds for us, it will, like the present, rely strongly on the foundation that collectors like Gordon Wall built for it.

GORDON WALL II (by John Starr)

I met Gordon Wall some twenty-five years ago when I started frequenting his record shop in Adelaide. I remember I was sorting through the Bing LP's when a little chap appeared at my elbow and said "Do you like Bing?"

I said "yes".

He asked me if I collected his records and I said that I did.
What about him, I asked. He said, "Oh, I've got a few".

This pretty well sums Gordon up. He prefers to stay in the shadows but the contribution he has made to the preservation of rare Crosby material has been enormous. I know of more than fifty collector-series LPs he has either produced personally or contributed material to - records which have rarely displayed his name. This significance of this contribution will grow in time, as copies of rare material will continue to be preserved in odd corners of the world when the originals have ceased to exist.

Gordon retired from the record business many years ago and lives with his wife, Joyce, adjacent to one of the major golf courses in Adelaide.

Others who knew him before I did will have to be relied upon to point to his early career as a cartoonist on a Melbourne newspaper. Joyce is similarly talented although they devote themselves these days to the golf course.

Gordon's generosity to other collectors has been outstanding. When this is remarked upon, he points to the help others have given him over the years, saying that he could not have developed his collection without help from others and he is merely carrying on the tradition. Another pointer to his character and to why I am glad I dropped into his shop all those years ago.

.....

COLIN PUGH

By Keith Parkinson

Anyone in conversation with U.K.member Colin Pugh about his Bing collection will realize early on just how strongly he values the help of fellow collectors. His praise of people from all over the world who have assisted him is fulsome and he quickly gives them credit.

I first reliazed how helpful Colin could be when he was appealing for Columbia 78s for examination in respect of one of his many Crosby research projects. I had sent him a disc he wanted and in return he came up with an EP of Bing's Kraft Music Hall songs which had received very limited distribution. We remained in contact, and a few years ago, we collaborated on a basic filmography for publication in 'Bingville News'. At that stage, I realized how thorough Colin was in regard to accuracy and completeness. Prolonged correspondence ensued over the inclusion of one title and I was left with a firm impression that Colin puts his name to Crosbyana research only when he is convinced that no avenue has been left unexplored.

To most collectors outside England, Colin will be known as the author of 'The Alternate Bing Crosby' and the in-depth liner notes of the Jonzo 'Chronological Bing Crosby' album series. The former publication is in an advanced state of updating with a view to John Joyce publishing a new hardback edition. As far as the Chronological series is concerned, Colin's enlightened notes will continue as this series progresses with renewed impetus. Colin writes so perceptively about Bing's vocals that I find myself listening with fresh insight to these 78 transfers.

Outside of 'The Guinness Book of Records', it is difficult to tag the biggest collection of Bing records or associated Crosbyana with any degree of certainty. To say that no-one has a more comprehensive collection of Crosby recordings than Colin Pugh will be a hard fact to dispute. All commercial releases and every non-commercial recording known to exist, reside in Colin's collection.

Facts and figures can be boring, but a count by Colin a few years ago revealed in excess of 6,000 discs. This total includes phonocards, acetates, transcriptions and bootleg issues. In addition, as the cassette catalogue recently published by our Society shows, the collection also takes in tapings of all descriptions. And then there are the scrapbooks. The photograph illustrating this article concentrates on the main Bing library in Colin's Bristol home. There is an overflow room accomodating several years of scrapbook material as well as a Bing book library.

Colin's collection was born about 55 years ago. It consisted of a solitary 78, LEARN TO CROON, but as all collectors know, a record bought in 1933 can inspire a runaway collecting bug. Colin's 78's were eventually joined by microgroove discs and eventually tapes. A sheet music collection was started and this now tops 600 copies, all with Bing associations. Now the technology of the 1980s finds a video tape librray nearing 100 jostling for space in Colin's collection. I asked Colin what held pride of place amongst his rarities and he barely hesitated before he named two Russian albums by Bing on the Melodya label.

In a sense, Colin keeps a low profile in collecting circles. He doesn't attend Bing meetings and he never went out of his way to make personal contact with Bing. Although he enjoyed a London Palladium Concert in the mid-70's, he was not round at the stage door afterwards making himself known. It was simply satisfying for Colin to receive a tape in which Bing made passing reference to him.

Colin has not had any collecting setback in over half a century. His only regret is that great enemy, time. He still runs a shop, and this restricts sensible activities like tending a Bing collection.

In a discussions we had about this profile, Colin mentioned several helpful collectors by name. Shortly afterwards he wrote to me, putting on record an acknowledgement for "the wonderful help I have received from collectors all over the world". It would be inappropriate to name names but I know that Colin is also highly regarded by fellow collectors. The generous attitude of others is only a reflection of Colin's own philosophy.

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THE Q.B.C.S. REPORT

From Vic Bridger

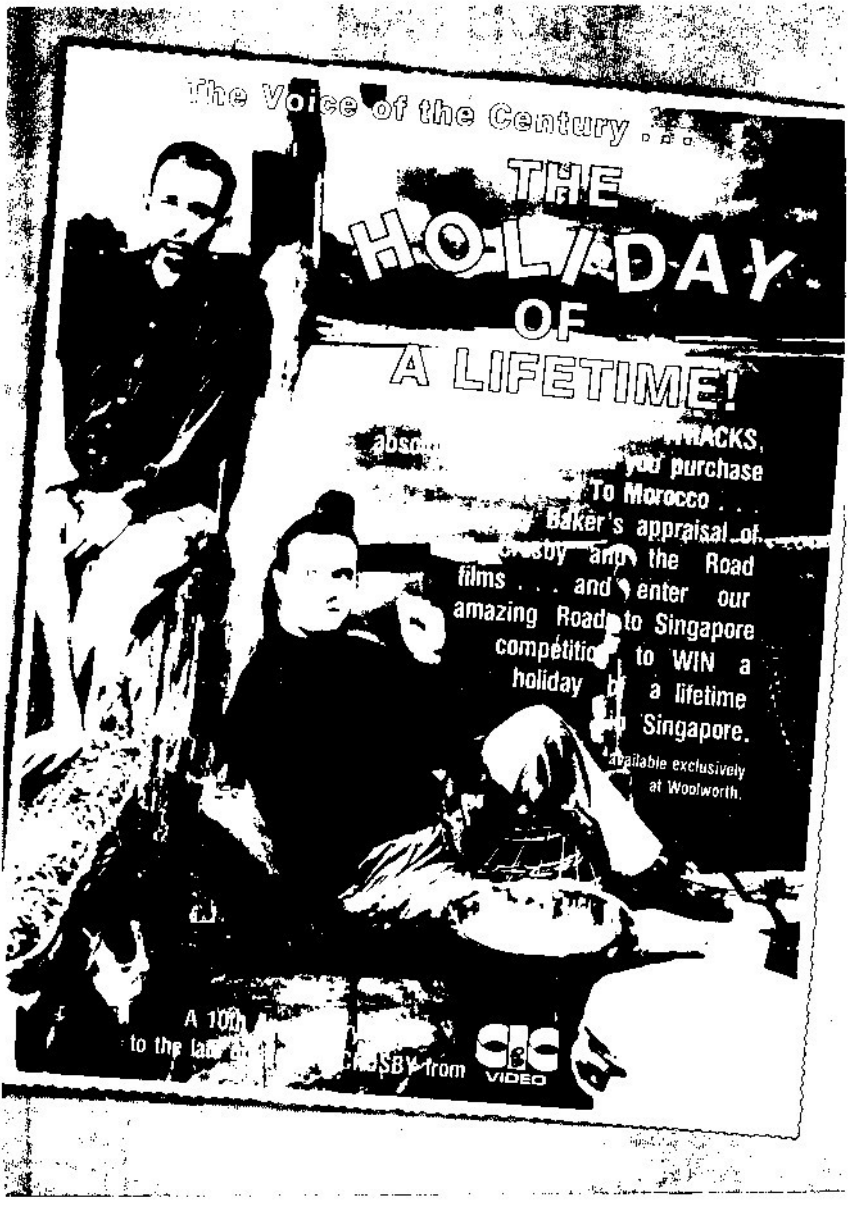
(Last August, the QBCS held a movie evening in association with the Queensland Al Jolson Society. Vic writes:)

This function was a huge success and at the conclusion of the night, no-one wished to leave. Fortunately, I had prepared a short tape incorporating some of the interview on the Parkinson show and a couple of numbers which had been recorded just before his departure. There were a few moist eyes and then all were satisfied.

In 1988, we are arranging a few differnet types of functions such as a cruise down the river and a Crosby sing-a-long.

Next year my wife and I are planning a trip to England and the States and I will be writing to some of the groups over there to make contact, as we would love to meet some of them.

(Vic's letter to me was dated November 1 - which shows how late this magazine really is!!! Possibly Vic may be overseas by now, but if any UK or US members would like to write to Vic to set up a meeting, the address of the QBCS is PO Box 92, Ferny Hills, Queensland 4055, Australia. BM)



Of the above, Girvan Paterson writes: "Our old friend John Marshall in England has been at it again! He's managed to convince CIC Video to promote its BING CROSBY COLLECTION with a competition to win a trip for two to Singapore. It's designedto promote their latest release ROAD TO MOROCCO. John feels that if this promotion can result in sales of 4 - 5 thousand, then it should ensure that this series of videos continues.

THE B.C.H.S. REPORT

WASHINGTON STATE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

A Centennial Project of the Bing Crosby Historical Society

Washington State has played a major role in the development of the American entertainment industry over the past 100 years. In addition to producing a considerable number of entertainers, the State has fostered other areas. For example, one Seattle television station procured the use of video tape after Bing Crosby, another Washington native, used his financial resources to develop this medium. The sum total of Washington State's contribution to entertainment has caused the Bing Crosby Historical Society to assume the lead in planning and implementing projects related to the history of the entertainment industry in the state.

The purpose of the 'Washington State Goes to Hollywood' project is to introduce people living in or visiting here of our contribution to entertainment from 1889 to the present day. To this end, a travelling exhibit of photographs, artifacts and video productions is being planned. This exhibit will be flexible enough in design to travel all around.

Project Status

The Bing Crosby Historical Society has spent over two years in planning this project. This planning has been in three parts: (1) budget development plus fundraising; (2) endorsements and (3) research and design related to the exhibit.

BCHS sought endorsements to determine if there was sufficient statewide interest to proceed with the final planning and fundraising needed for the project. The result of this effort was a positive response to the idea of having a travelling exhibit and permanent gallery.

Exhibit Purpose and Development

Chronologically, the exhibit will begin in 1889, the year Washington became a state, and end with the 1970's. The linear space within the trailer will be divided into several stations, each highlighting a certain phase of entertainment history. These include the Gay 90's, silent movies, radio, phonographs, television and the advent of magnetic tape.

Each section will contain photographs, artifacts and video productions.

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THE BCHS QUESTIONAIRE - PLEASE REPLY

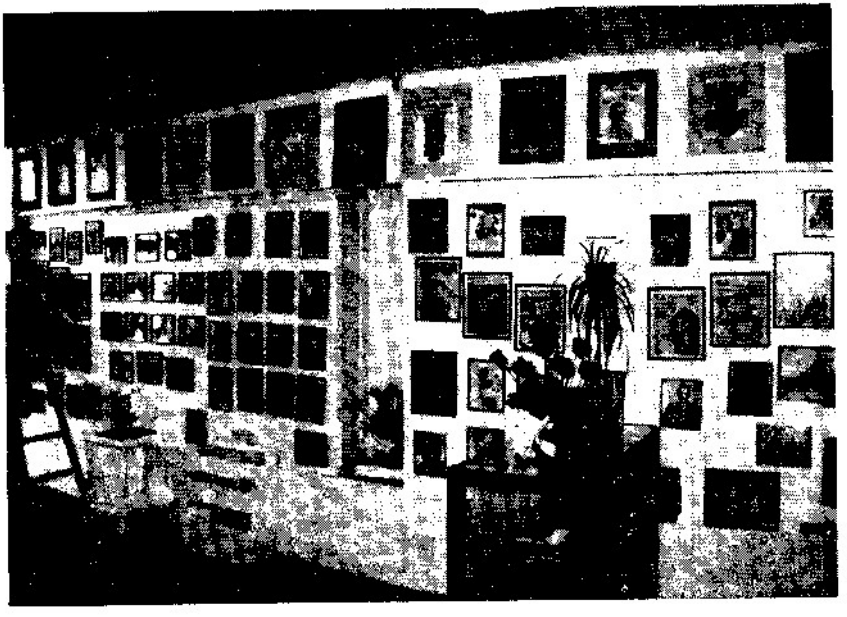
BCHS is trying to determine the most popular Crosby Movies, songs and co-stars.

Could you please list 1) Your five favourite Crosby movies in order
2) Your five favourite Crosby records in order
3) Your favourite Crosby co-star (male or female)

and send your list to:

Carl M Newton
Director
The Bing Crosby Historical Society
PO Box 216
Tacoma
Washington 98401
USA

THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - TWO VIEWS OF THEIR NEW OFFICES



COLLECTORS' CORNER

The above label has been called the world's most rare commercially-issued 78 of Bing Crosby. It's a maroon and gold 10-inch UK Ariel release, of which only two copies are known to exist in Britain. This particular copy comes from the collection well-known British collector John Bassett and we are reproducing it from John's magazine BINGVILLE NEWS. Sadly, the edition in which it appeared was the last that John is producing. After 6 years of producing an excellent Crosby publication, John has decided to give it away. I hope that he won't mind us sharing this rarity with the members of the BCHS who did not subscribe to Bingville News.

GRACIAS ("Thanks" to you)

I don't have too many records in my collection from other counties in which the song title has been translated into the local language. But this is one of them. It was sent to me several years ago by our Brazilian member, Joaõ Daudt D'Oliveira Neto.

Three early American Brunswicks of interest.

Not much that I can say about these three tracks, I just find the labels attractive to look at.

And of course, these are virtually all the original issues.

AT 3.05 this afternoon, 7HFC-FM presents *In Memory of Bing Crosby* as part of the *Weekend Special* series.

Malcolm Cooney highlights his music on the 10th anniversary of his death.

LETTER BOX

From Ken Merry, South Yorkshire

Apart from Bing enthusiasts, it is not generally recognized how awareness of Bing permeated our life and times, especially the 1930's-40's-50's. References to him have manifested themselves in unexpected places. I wish now I had a catalogue of them. Here are a few recent ones. A few weeks ago on TV, I saw a film on TV that I had not seen for many years, "A Walk In The Sun". Made in 1944, it deals with G.I.'s moving inland from a beachhead in Italy. More characters and dialogue than action. While marching, a G.I. declares, "I've got all of Bing Crosby's records but the last one." Recently, re-reading James Michiner's "Return to Paradise", published in 1951, one instance refers to a U.S. serviceman who returns to the Pacific island he was stationed on. It is a year or so after World War II and he takes a lot of goodies including records. The text states "We made a great festivity and the record player was set up in the front room where we gathered many nights to hear Bing Crosby". Later it states "Australia has a strong baseball league, with junior teams who wear uniforms donated by Bing Crosby".

From Wig Wiggins, Queensland

(U.S. member Wig Wiggins, a member of the U.S. Diplomatic Corps, is now resident in Australia! He writes:)

Things are going very well for me here in Brisbane, but since I am a one-man Consular Post, I haven't had much opportunity to travel during my first six-months in Australia. I hope to remedy that in the future.

From Charles D Baillie, California

It was very interesting to hear about your visit to the USA. In case you haven't already heard, the 'star' you missed on the 'Hollywood Walk of Fame' is in front of the Doolittle Theatre at 1615 Vine Street, about a block south of Hollywood Boulevard.

Bing had three stars in all - Radio, Movies and TV. He did not receive one for TV. I wrote to the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce suggesting that they dedicate the TV Star to Bing on the 10th anniversary of his death, even suggested the spot in front of the Hollywood Palace Theatre where he appeared as M.C. in so many great variety shows. Unfortunately, they ignored my proposal!

Almost forgot the significance of Bing's third star. The Movie Industry started (surprisingly) on the corner of Hollywood Bvd and Vine Street many years ago, so it's appropriate that Bing is represented on both streets.

During the recent screening of "Remembering Bing", our local PBS Station had in interesting tie-in for their Fund Raising appeal. If you contributed $100 or more, they would send you a copy of the Tenth Anniversary Album on record or cassette. Hope that they sent a bundle!

From Les Street, Cardiff

The three-LP set from Ken Barnes has proven to be a fine quality item, very nice to add to one collection, even if it was pity about the poems. According to Ken Barnes, the reasons are mainly legal.

The three videos that John Marshall has been discussing with CIC are now out and are available in most good record stores. I've already got ROAD TO ZANZIBAR and hope to have ROAD TO SINGAPORE and HOLIDAY INN for Christmas (1987). The quality of both film and soundtrack are superb.

From Ken Twiss, Tacoma

It was too bad that I was not able to talk to you on the phone when you were in the USA. As you know, I have been under doctor's care since last March, and

between appointments and physical therapy, I am not home or at the office too much. I am getting much beter now, and can get more work done. BCHS moved their offices on January 4th, 1988. We are now in the Pantages Centre which gives us more visability. The new Gallery and Reception area has received many rave reviews. There is now adequate space for the computer, copy machine and two work stations without the users interrupting each other.

(NOTE: You can see photos of the new BCHS offices elsewhere in this issue. BM)

From Bob Schrader, Port Pirie

I have just come across four cassettes that are not in the cassette catalogue:

TC-AX156104 - AXIS - My Golden Favourites (14 songs)
DINO 17C - 20 Golden Greats
GE-106 - Moonlight Bay - Golden Editions (New Zealand) The Hughes Leisure Group Ltd. (Taken from radio shows)
TC-FA157007 - Bing Singalonf Vol 2 - FAME

From Ron Daniels, Victor Harbour

Ken Hopkins wrote in LETTER BOX recently about purchasing videos from the U.K. I obtained a copy of "White Christmas" sent out by a friend and it is labelled "Not for sale or hire in Australia ir New Zealand" so he may have problems in that regard. Possibly CEL are the people we should be chasing here.

(Ron, I thought that WHITE CHRISTMAS was available here on tape. Can anyone add to this? BM)

From Steven Thomas, Rydalmere

I don't know whether you are aware that Axis has just released an album of Bing singing country songs. It is called CROSBY COUNTRY and priced at only $5.99. The number of the disc is AX 701369.

From Mark Scrimger, Parma

I'm sending you an article on Bing which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post back in 1942. It was written by a man named H Allen Smith who went on to greater fame as a writer of humorous books. One of his later works was entitled MAN ON THE TOTEM POLE and it has a chapter on how the article came into being. It has nothing bad to say about Bing, but it is an interesting study of how Bing's family tried to protect him from any adverse publicity and this is a little covered aspect of Crosby's life.

(Both the article and the book extract appear in this issue of the Crosby Voice and they certainly do make interesting reading. Thanks Mark. BM)

From Stan Sherlock, Donvale

Whilst visiting a 91 year old aunt in a nursing home for Christmas, I heard in the patient's lounge Bing singing the closing Christmas song from SAY ONE FOR ME. An old gentleman in his wheel chair looked at me and gruffly said "There'll never be another one like him!" What better tribute.

From Hugh McTeigue, Northbridge

I don't suppose its news to travel 30 kilometres to see a Bing Crosby film. In my recent trip to Queensland, I attended a QBCS meeting and we travelled much further than that and enjoyed it very much.

This time, however, it was a very special journey to attend the virginal meeting of the Stuart Lords' at Castle Hill in the North of Sydney on January 15th. The Lords are a delightful couple, and, as well as myself, welcoed half a dozen or so of the Sydney members to their beautiful house, completely redecorated by Stuart himself.

A bubbly conversation with intermittant laughs was interspersed with Crosby tracks and I saw for the first time, labels on records that I never new existed.

The film of the evening was super one by Bing: MR MUSIC. The personality of Bing came across very well combined with the talents of Charles Coburn and Nancy Olson. In addition, Marge and Gower Champion demonstrated their dancing skils while Groucho ("Give me her number son") Marx performed in a good routine with Bing. Peggy Lee also sang and Dorothy Kirsten shared ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN with Bing.

It was a delightful evening, and as we left, I remarked to our Chief in Sydney, Harry Peters (who drove me), that I didn't know how late it was. He replied, "Half an hour - and you'll be home"! If you're ever in Sydeny, call out and see the Stuart Lords. As far as I am concerned, they're "High on my list".

From Tracey Lee, Glebe

(Last issue, we published two rare production stills from the shooting of two of Bing's films, kindly supplied by Tracey Lee. Unfortunately, Tracey's letter accompanying the stills was misplaced and so we couldn't give you their background. Tracey re-supplied the details for us, but in the meantime, his original letter has surfaced! So here it is now. BM)

I spent some considerable time in Hollywood in March of 1987 with Dorothy Lamour as well as Mrs Pauline Kessinger who ran the Paramount Studios Commisary from 1927 until in was closed in the early 70's. Both reminisced fondly about Bing. It is from Miss Lamour's personal collection that the two photos come. The one of Bing alone is a candid still taken on the set of ROAD TO UTOPIA and I believe never issued.

The other snap is even rarer. It is from the production number of the title song of the film ROAD TO BALI which was cut from the final release print. Dorothy states that the reason for this was simply that Hope and Crosby hated to rehearse and they failed to spend sufficient time on this intricate song and dance routine. (She laughingly said "they preefrred playing golf"). Thus, when the number came to be filmed, it was, she admits frankly "a shambles"! It was so badly done that it could not be used.

I know that Bob Hope has the filmed number in his personal collection and showed it once in one of his TV specials, about 12 years ago, unfortunately before the days of video.

Mrs Kessinger was extremely fond of Bing and every year for more than 20 years, baked his very favourite cookies (oatmeal) in a huge batch as a Christmas ritual. She showed me many personal letters from, some typed, some handwritten, with grateful thanks for her kindness. She was apparently baking them right up to the years of Bing's death, even after she had retired and moved to the San Francisco area.

One piece of unbelievable news she confided to me was that Bing had a very heavy romance with Ingrid Nergman and that miss Bergman was very much in love with Bing. This is not meant to be cheap gossip, but I found this news surprising as I'm sure you all will, Many of us have already heard of Bing's little 'flings' with such lovely ladies as Joan Caulfield and Mona Freeman, but I'd never heard before about Bergman.

Miss Lamour's one regret was that Bing apparently took an attitude towards her when ROAD TO HONG KONG was about to be made, considering her too old to play the female lead. But once on the set again, they were happy, fun days whilst working - just like the old times.

September 11, 1987

Channel 7 Melbourne

Mr. G. Paterson
18 Coolibar Avenue,
Seaford,
VICTORIA .. 3198

Dear Mr. Paterson,

Many thanks for your letter regarding Bing Crosby.

I am sure you will be pleased to know that ATV Channel Ten will be telecasting a Special tribute to Bing Crosby and two of his Movies, on Saturday, October 17. Bill Collins will host RHYTHM OF THE RIVER and A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT.

We have made enquiries through our LOS ANGELES agent for more information on the Special REMEMBERING BING. If we are successful we will advise our viewers with suitable publicity.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

R.I. BURNS
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

GIRVAN GETS RESULTS!
Both the attached letters are self-explanatory. Good one Girvan!

8 October, 1987.

AUSTARAMA TELEVISION PTY. LTD.

Mr Girvan Paterson,
18 Coolibar Avenue,
SEAFORD, 3198.

Dear Mr Paterson,

Thank you for your letter regarding "Bing Crosby".

As you have probably noticed, as a direct result of your letter we have scheduled "High Society" to be screened on Saturday 10th October.

We appreciate your comments and hope you continue to enjoy our programs.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Attard
Program Department

Life in a Putty Knife Factory

CHAPTER XV *Of Bananas and Crosbys*

WHEN my father was in the vicinity of twelve years old he was unreasonable about bananas. He could never get enough of them. In those days bananas were almost as rare as rotolactors and Pop's passionate yearning for them became a source of irritation to his parents.

One afternoon his father summoned him to the front yard of the Smith homestead. Hanging from a lower limb of the mulberry tree was a stalk of bananas, full and complete.

"Yonder's some bananas for you," said Caleb Smith.

The entire family, augmented by half-a-dozen neighbors, gathered in the front yard to watch Pop eat bananas. He vows to this day that he didn't move off the spot until he had consumed every one of those bananas. He has not eaten another during all of the ensuing fifty years. It nauseates him to be in the same room with a banana.

Something similar happened to me in 1941. I acquired a surfeit of Crosbys. There were times during that year when a mere whispering of the name was sufficient to send me to bed.

I mention this attack of Crosby allergy by way of preface to a short course in the art of writing for magazines. The story begins back in the summer of 1940 and has its genesis, properly enough, in a saloon.

At that time I might have been described as a warm admirer of Bing Crosby's style of singing. I attended his movies, sometimes listened to his radio programs, and occasionally bought his records. Still, I didn't like Bing Crosby as much as Pop liked bananas.

That summer afternoon, on my way home from work, I stopped in a record shop, looked over the new releases, and bought a couple of Crosby platters. Further along toward home I undertook the pause that refreshes. The bartender was a young fellow—a man I'd never seen before. I had the envelope containing the records lying on the bar beside me when he came up. He looked at me, nodded toward it, and said:

"See ya got some records."

"Yep," I said.

He studied me a moment, then leaned forward and remarked:

"Bet I know what records you got."

There was nothing printed on the big envelope to suggest what was inside so I said I bet he didn't know.

"Crosby," he said.

Naturally I was a trifle agitated, being a person who holds no belief in the occult and also being convinced that no human possesses X-ray eyes.

"How did you know that?" I demanded.

He grinned. "You got that Crosby look," he said. "You look like a Crosby man."

When I got home I spent quite some time with a mirror, but I couldn't figure it. I took to worrying about the thing. I began taking a deeper interest in the doings of Bing Crosby and I started talking about him whenever I was around the Broadway know-it-alls. Little by little I acquired anecdotes about Crosby, and after two or three months the fact dawned on me: if I hadn't been a Crosby man before, I was a Crosby man now.

The story of the guy's career and the peculiarities of his personality fascinated me. Then one day I encountered Stuart Rose, associate editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, and started yammering Crosby at him. Within a week I

had been given an assignment to do the story of Crosby for the *Post*. I was told that half-a-dozen writers had come to the *Post* from time to time with the same idea, but they had all been turned down. Now the *Post* editors had decided that I was the proper person to do Crosby. Apparently they looked at me as the bartender had looked at me and concluded I was a Crosby man.

I never got so sick of a thing in all my life as I did of that job. I scurried around New York for a while, digging up people who had known Crosby. I went out to Hollywood for the primary purpose of collecting Crosby material. Before I was finished I had talked to more than a hundred persons, and I had enough material on the Life and Times of Bing Crosby to produce a biography bigger than Sandburg's *Lincoln*. Part of this material appeared eventually as two articles in the *Post*. The rest of it—a bundle as big as last week's wet wash—occupies a corner of my workroom, serving me as a constant warning and reproach. It isn't a symbol of wasted effort, but rather represents a lesson I've learned—the same lesson Pop learned when he ate too many bananas.

During that assignment it seemed that every step I took I turned up a heel. I recall once having recommended a book about the Russian Romanovs to Fred Allen. Soon after that I had a note from him saying he was halfway through it. He wrote: "I haven't come across so many bastards since I played in vaudeville." I feel much the same way about the Crosby job. Looking back on it, I can remember only a couple of men I actually enjoyed meeting. One was Dr. Simon L. Ruskin, who was operating an entire hospital virtually by himself but who took an hour off and favored me with a lecture on the subject of singers' nodes with particular reference to the nodes studding the Crosby larynx. The other was Jack Kapp, president of the Decca Company, which issues Crosby records.

Mr. Kapp turned out to be a noble creature alongside most of the others; yet he gave me a few bad moments. He asked me to dinner at his house, and the dinner went along nicely until toward the end when a dish containing *broiled* grapefruit was placed in front of me. It was one of those situations where I had to make conversation and maintain a sly reconnaissance on the others, waiting for someone else to start eating to see how it was done. Such things always throw me off balance, but I was recovering poise after getting my hands on the right tools, and then somebody brought in finger bowls, and floating in the finger-bowl water was a rose petal. A full hour elapsed after dinner before I was able to ask Mr. Kapp a sensible question about Crosby.

The quest for Crosby material furnished justification for Buddy DeSylva's remark that he didn't know eighteen men in all Hollywood who could be trusted with baseball bats in their hands. It soon became apparent to me that there is no such thing as a legitimate transaction in Hollywood—that everyone in the town is suspicious of everyone else. In its fundamentals, my job was simplicity itself. I was merely gathering material for the purpose of writing some pieces about Bing Crosby for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Yet virtually everyone I approached eyed me with skeptical distrust, asking either with the mouth or with the manner: "Okay. What's the angle?" Nobody could believe that I was simply engaged on a legitimate writing project. The theory appears to be that every man who comes around with a piece of business in hand is a double-dealer, a thimble-rigger, and a footpad.

The first Crosby I met was Everett, a muscle-bound man who is Bing's manager as well as his brother. Everett was in New York when I called on him at his office. I had been warned that he was a tough man to get along with so I put my case to him with gentleness and tact. He sat and stared straight ahead, and when I had finished telling him what I wanted to do, he grunted and said:

"Didja get Bing's permission to write about him?"

I said that Bing had indicated by telegram that he looked with favor on the project, whereupon Everett grunted again and growled:

"How much's th' *Saturday Evening Post* payin' Bing for this?"

From these two questions I quickly reached the conclusion that Everett is one of those fellows who are unhandy performing certain simple operations with a boot. I got away from him and went to Hollywood.

Personal business took me to the NBC studios on the first day I was in town. I was on my way to one of the offices, heading down a corridor, when I came upon Bing himself. He was sitting on a bench and I almost fell into his lap before I recognized him. I stuck out my hand and introduced myself.

"Oh, yeah," he said. "I heard you were comin' out."

"How've you been?" I asked.

"Fine," he said. "And you?"

"Fine," I said. And that was the last I saw of Bing.

Next on my calling list was Larry Crosby. Larry is the oldest of the Crosby boys and in theory is Bing's publicity man. I went to see him at the Crosby building on Sunset Boulevard and almost immediately I saw that he was suspicious of me. Before long I found out the nature of his apprehensions. It appears that Larry and another brother, Ted, wrote a biography of Bing back in 1927. They wrote it themselves (no question about that) and they published it themselves and they are proud of it. Bing must love them deeply to have ever permitted its publication.

Among other beautiful incidents the book tells of the time back in Spokane when Bing was a child and when his mother got word that one of her relatives had bought an automobile. This made Mrs. Crosby wistful, but little Bing toddled up to her and told her not to worry—that when he grew up they'd have a couple of automobiles.

"I'm gonna make a million dollars—just you wait and see—and you can have all kinds of servants," said tiny Bing, according to the book.

There's another occasion recited in the authorized biography in which Pop Crosby comes home with a gramophone and sets it to playing the "Merry Widow Waltz," which causes Mrs. Crosby to grow wistful again, and once more little Bing comes over to her and says:

"Gee, Ma. You like it, don't you?"

There in the Crosby offices Larry told me he suspected I was collecting material for a book about Bing, and that such a book would be put in competition with his own book, and he wouldn't stand for any such thing as that. In other words, I was traveling under false pretenses.

When I outlined some of the things I wanted to do, Larry told me I was taking too much for granted. It was foolish of me to think of spending any time at Bing's house.

"We'll arrange to get you together with him," said Larry, "but you can't ask him anything about his private life. You can talk to him about golf and you can talk to him about horses. If you try to talk about anything else, he won't see you."

"The hell with that all over the place," I said. "I don't want to talk to him about golf and horses. If that's the setup, I don't want to talk to him at all."

After that I bade him farewell and said good-by to Pop Crosby, who had been in the office with us, and then I went away. I didn't go back.

When I returned to New York I learned that Larry and Everett were quarreling by way of the mails, accusing each other of messing up my project, so I went to see Everett again. He practically bowed me into his office, gave me his own chair back of his desk, made a few remarks about Larry, and told me he'd give me anything and everything I wanted. And he did. During two long evening sessions he talked for hours at a stretch, telling me tales about his brother and about the whole Crosby family.

Subsequently, when he saw what I had written, my operatives tell me he let out a piercing scream.

"Whisky, whisky, whisky!" he cried. "You'd think Bing's middle name was Whisky from this stuff!"

"Well," broke in someone, "where did Smith get all those stories?"

"I gave them to him," shouted Everett, "but Jesus God, does that mean he's gotta put 'em in print?"

The Crosbys had other hysterical objections to my articles. By putting a lot of twos and twos together and cross-checking in the family's own book, I discovered conclusively that Bing was—at the time I was writing—forty years old. I could understand their objection to having this fact printed. Bing has a tremendous following among the ladies and, from that point of view, is one of the nation's champion kidney-weakeners. So I was willing to go along and say nothing specific about his age. I was willing until the Crosbys demanded that I describe him as being thirty-three. That, as Artemus Ward used to put it, wuz a mutch.

Gathering the material, I had interviewed movie people, radio people, advertising people, newspapermen, recording people, singers, musicians—everything but racehorses. And when I was finished, I figured I knew more about Bing Crosby than Bing Crosby did. Strangely enough, even though I overloaded on Crosby just as Pop overloaded on bananas, I came out of it still admiring the guy—still a Crosby man. When I say I'm still a Crosby man, I mean I'm a BING Crosby man.

The story of Bing's career remains to me an American epic because it is the reverse of the traditional success story. *Time* magazine once commented that Bing made a bum out of Horatio Alger, Jr., and that, approaching the apex of his career, he is "still falling uphill." He has been the antithesis of all that the Sunday schools and the Boy Scouts and the "Y" secretaries taught—and look at him! He has consistently violated all the rules and he still violates them whenever he chooses. His attitude toward me was the same as his attitude toward the rest of the press. Where most of the Hollywood stars look upon personal publicity as the life-blood of their business, stooping to inane invention and trickery to get it, Bing thumbs his nose at it.

There are other shining stars who back away from interviewers and who make no compacts with the chit-chat columnists, guaranteeing those columnists full and exclusive reports on future romances, marriages, prospective whelpings, divorces, changes in hair-do, and the like. Yet none of these brushes off the press because of sheer indifference as Bing does.

The Women's Press Club of Hollywood once voted Fred Astaire the most unco-operative actor in Hollywood from a publicity point of view. Crosby came in second—a photo finish. Astaire doesn't normally co-operate because he is a shy, sensitive man who suffers anguish in the presence of an interviewer, suspecting that every question is deliberately framed for the purpose of tricking him into an asinine answer. Crosby, on the other hand, is unco-operative because he just doesn't give a damn.

Privately he justifies his behavior toward the press with two arguments. He contends that he needs publicity—the kind of publicity that comes of being interviewed—about as much as he needs a hole in his head. He has three tremendous publicity outlets at his command: a weekly radio program, three motion pictures a year, and records. These instruments spread the Crosby voice and the Crosby personality to the ends of the earth, and he is in a position to control and direct them to suit his own whims. He cannot prevent a writer from twisting his phrases and making him look foolish or hammy, but in the production of his movies, of his broadcasts, and of his recordings, he is the boss. If Crosby wants a certain thing done, it's done; and if Crosby objects to something else, out it goes. Wherefore, what need has he of the kind of publicity the press has to offer?

His second argument is his answer to the sheep cry: "But you owe it to your public." All he owes to his public, in his own logic, is his best performance, whether on the screen, on the air, or on records. His job is to entertain and amuse the customers but not on street corners or in his bedroom. He makes a picture and the customers flock into the theaters to see it. If they enjoy it, if they like his performance, then he has done his job. It is not required that he be waiting outside the theater to hand them photographs of himself, sing a couple more songs, go into a rigadoon, sign their autograph books, and introduce them to his wife and kids.

His success has brought him everything he ever yearned for a thousand times over. He never yearned for much. He never believed in himself, save perhaps at the very beginning of his career when he felt he might, with help from on high, become a middling vaudeville performer.

His friends and his family have had to browbeat him and flog him up the road that led to success. Time after time, when things were beginning to break his way, he gave up, tried to disappear, announced himself a failure. He has been wheedled and bluffed and tricked into doing the things that, in the end, brought a golden torrent pouring into his lap. He achieved notoriety long before he achieved fame. Almost to a man the people who surrounded him in the early days held no hope of his ever getting anywhere. Whenever his name came up they'd shake their heads and agree that Crosby was headed for perdition. Yet the wild and irresponsible rhythm boy of 1929 has become one of the most respectable family men in Hollywood. He has assembled part of the Crosby clan about him and they help run his extensive business affairs, sometimes quarreling among themselves but always standing united when danger threatens from without. And drinking has long since ceased to be a problem with him. He still drinks but, in his own phrase, "never in self defense." His story inspires me because he has proved that the rule books are crazy.

The Crosbys lived on the wrong side of the tracks in Spokane and traced their ancestry back to the *Mayflower*. Pop Crosby worked in a brewery and there was a house

full of kids. Al Rinker, the piano banger who was Bing's first partner on the stage, remembers the Crosby home in Spokane quite vividly. Rinker is now in the radio business in New York. He told me that the Crosby house was like a zoo where all the animals are mad at each other. The place was in a constant uproar with the kids quarreling and fighting, and it was all Mrs. Crosby could do to keep a piece of furniture intact. Pop Crosby was never a razor-strap man. When one of the kids got out of hand it was his custom to grab up a stick of kindling wood and whack the miscreant alongside the head.

When Bing's larynx first began bringing in profits Everett was a truck salesman in Los Angeles and not doing well at it. Larry was barely getting along in an advertising agency up North. Pop and Kate Crosby still lived in Spokane. Today Pop and Kate and one of the married daughters and Everett and Larry all live comfortably in Hollywood.

As I may have suggested Everett is not the most popular man in the movie capital. He is tough and he is cunning. A lot of people who have tried to best him in a deal now hate him and curse him in company. When he gave up selling trucks to take over as manager Bing was just another vaudeville and night-club performer. Granting him his due, he has done a good job of steering his younger brother up the hill.

Half the con men and crackpots of the nation have tried at one time or another to nibble at the golden flow of Crosby money. Everett is the man who throws them out. He doesn't just throw them out the door; he hurls them into the next county. He has probably scraped through the surface of more gold bricks than any man in Hollywood. One of his perennial customers is an inventor who wants to sell Bing a grandstand for the Del Mar race track. It is no ordinary grandstand. When the horses leave the barrier, the grandstand takes off with them, riding on tracks, and travels even with the pack right around to the finish line.

There's a legend in Hollywood about a certain actor whose relatives came down upon him in such numbers that he had to move out of his own home or make provision for the visitors elsewhere. He resolved his dilemma by purchasing a complete tourist camp on the outskirts of Los Angeles and installing his kinsfolk in the cabins.

Then there's the story of the minor executive at one of the studios who proudly announced his promotion from second cousin to first cousin. And there have always been vague whisperings about stars who have mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers hidden away in the garret as though they were physical monstrosities.

Among Hollywood families the Crosbys are unique in that all of them work. Their universe revolves around Bing and their own fortunes are wrapped up in his, and they guard him as they'd guard a gold mine. If it can be said that any one member of the family rules the rest, that one is not Bing, nor Everett, but Kate Crosby. She is in her middle sixties and fully as alert and vigorous as she was twenty years ago. She and Pop Crosby live in a bungalow eight blocks from Bing's big house.

To this day Kate Crosby refuses to hire a maid and does all the housework herself. She still cooks and sews and knits and prays as she did in Spokane. From the beginning she has kept Bing's scrapbooks and preserved his letters. Bing himself has never paid much heed to clippings, although for several years he carried two ragged newspaper notices around in his wallet—one being a review of a Crosby movie in which his name was not even mentioned, and the other being a derisive commentary on his acting.

Kate Crosby is intensely religious and keeps her children posted, where it is necessary, on holy days and days of abstinence. Back in the Spokane days it was her custom, whenever trouble confronted any member of the family, to scurry for the Poor Clare convent where she would ask for prayers of intercession. She made such visits at all crucial moments in Bing's early career, and once when Bing was asked if he believed success came through luck, he replied that he preferred attributing his progress to "the workings of Providence." Nowadays, when troublous situations arise, Kate Crosby slips a $5.00 bill into an envelope and sends it off to the Poor Clares, asking for prayers.

She pays close attention to all of Bing's business affairs. Suppose the opening of a new Crosby picture is announced in the papers—with a photograph of Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour but no Bing. She'd be on the phone at once, demanding of Larry why Bing was left out. She telephones for Everett at the Crosby offices and, failing to get him, keeps calling all day until he shows up. Then she laces him down. Does he expect some stenographer to run the Crosby business? Does he think he can fritter away his time on the golf-course with all that business piling up?

Perhaps Everett is in New York. Kate Crosby reads an item to the effect that Paramount has bought two excellent stories for Bob Hope. Off goes an air-mail letter to Everett.

"Why is it," Kate Crosby demands, "that Paramount is buying these fine stories for Bob Hope? Why aren't they buying stories like that for Harry? Get after them."

She has always called her famous son Harry.

Bing first achieved big celebrity just ten years ago, in 1933, when he was singing for CBS in New York. One of his tasks at the time was to fill out a "bio book." This is a twenty-four page folder containing a wide variety of questions with spaces for the radio artist to fill in his answers. The book is then used as source material for publicity releases. I succeeded in getting my hands on Bing's 1933 book and it contains several responses worth noting, including a voluntary declaration that he'd do anything for publicity, if only a squib in the Bronxville *Gazette*. This from the guy who, today, hides himself from interviewers and sometimes makes Donald Duck noises whenever a press camera is trained on him.

One question in the "bio book" asks what the artist would do if he had a million dollars. Bing's holograph on this subject:

> I would go to California, buy a home, a boat, and a car; take up some light work, i.e., buy a piece of some prosperous business—travel abroad a bit, fish and golf in the interim—visit the various race tracks in season, and raise a small family. If a million bucks ever came my way, I could doubtless distribute a considerable amount to relatives, etc., in loans, and still have enough to carry out the program described. I'm pretty socialistic in this connection and really don't think anyone is entitled to or should have more than they need to live comfortably. My wants are comparatively simple and with half a million I could possibly scrape along somehow. In point of fact, if I ever connect with the aforesaid amount, I'll wash up.

During that same period Joe Mitchell called on Bing for an interview. The new singing star of radio and the screen was refreshingly candid with Mr. Mitchell, particularly when it came to a discussion of his past misdemeanors.

"They say I left a trail of broken hearts behind me when I left California for New York," said Bing. "Now, I

wouldn't do a thing like that. The fact is—I left a trail of broken bottles and unpaid bills."

Then his mind carried him back to the days when . . .

"I was pretty bad," said Bing. "I got in fights and things like that. Whisky has ruined my career five times in five years. I studied law in college and I can truthfully say that the bar of the state of Washington is the only bar I was ever kept out of.

"People who compare me with Vallee and the other mugs are more interested in me than I am in myself. I'd like to be able to sing like the crooners. The reason is—a crooner gets his quota of sentimentality with half his natural voice. That's a great saving. I don't like to work."

It is not my intention to go back over all that ground again because every time I get within five feet of that bundle containing the Crosby material I become afflicted with the pip—that disease in chickens which makes them droop their heads and look as though they didn't have a friend in the world. I only wanted to show people who have ambitions to write for the magazines that it's not always so simple as it looks.

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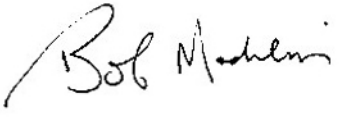
And that's where we'll leave this marathon issue of The Crosby Voice. Once again, I do apologize for taking so long to put this issue together, but, to coin a cliche, there simply aren't enough hours in a day!

I hope that you enjoyed the magazine.

Until next time,



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BACK PAGE SPECIAL
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SALLY FORTH By Greg Howard